

"We are realists... we dream the impossible" - Che



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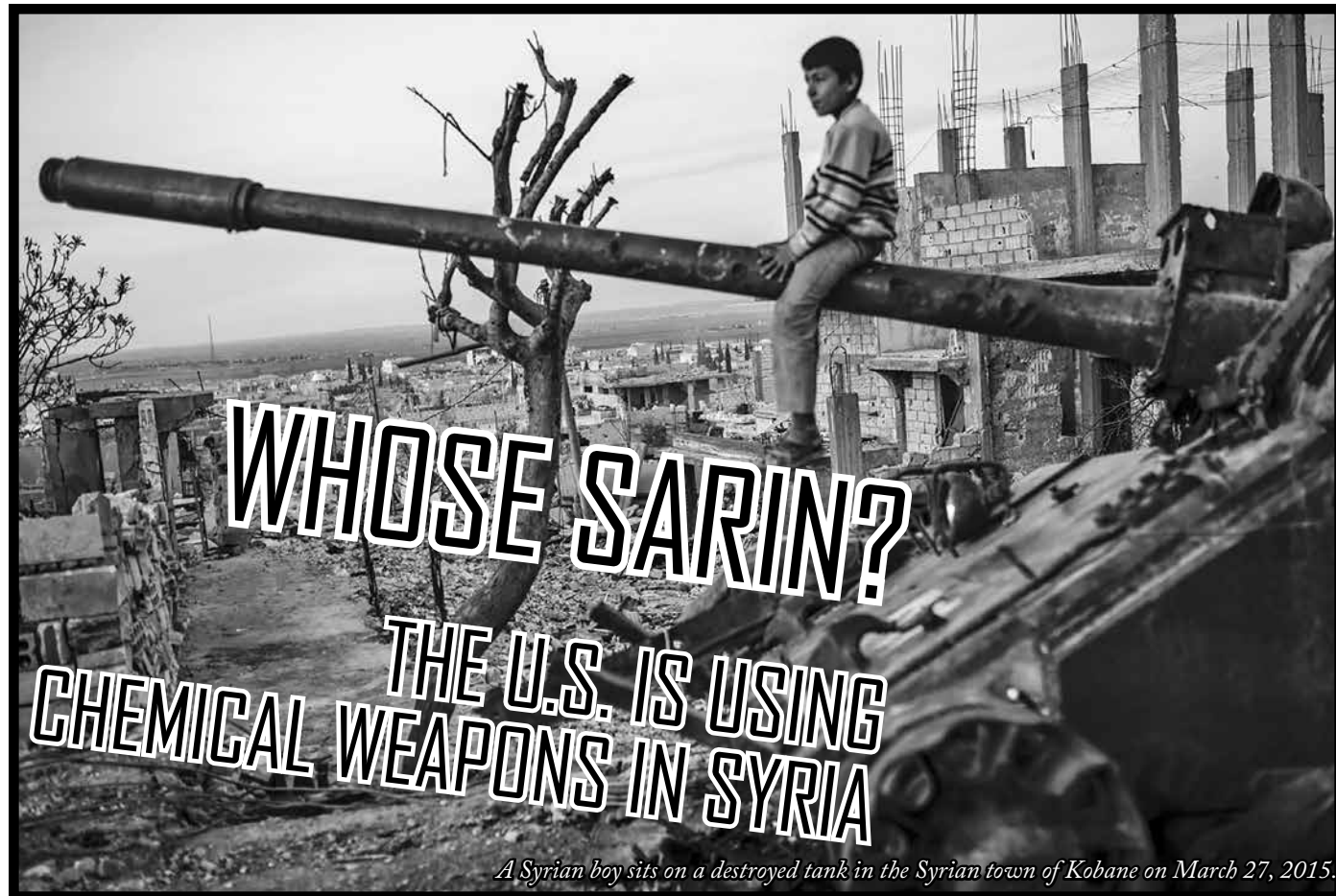
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By Nita Palmer

On April 7, the US Air Force pounded the Shayrat Air Base in Syria and surrounding communities with more than 60 Tomahawk missiles. This latest atrocity was in response to a chemical weapons attack allegedly carried out by the Syrian government in the town of Khan Sheikhun on April 4.

Whose Sarin is it, Anyway?

The White House immediately blamed the Syrian government for the attack, claiming that their intelligence as well as “open-source reporting” and “pro-opposition social media” painted a “consistent story about what we think happened”.

But nearly three weeks later, there is still not a shred of verifiable evidence that there was indeed a chemical weapons attack by the Syrian government. In fact, a group of more than two dozen former US intelligence analysts penned a letter to President Trump calling into question the so-called “evidence of this attack”, saying: “Our US Army contacts

in the area have told us this is not what happened. There was no Syrian “chemical weapons attack.”

Dr. Theodore Postol, Professor Emeritus of Science, Technology and National Security Policy at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and an expert in ballistic missiles also released three reports analyzing the White House Intelligence Report which found the Syrian government responsible for the chemical attack. After a thorough analysis of the findings, he concluded that the report was “a clumsy and outright fabrication of a report which was certainly not supported by the intelligence community.”

Furthermore, it is well-known that the Syrian government has no chemical weapons in its possession, as they were destroyed in 2014 under a UN mandate which was carried out by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Destruction of the chemicals was carried out by the US military themselves.

Indeed, if the US government was so

confident that the Syrian military was responsible for this attack, why did their delegation - along with the delegations of several allies - block a proposal for an investigation into the incident by the OPCW?

Perhaps it is because they fear an independent investigation would reveal an inconvenient and ugly truth: that it is the US-supported ‘rebels’, not the Syrian government, who possess sarin. The United Nations launched an investigation in 2013 after the US claimed that the Syrian government had then carried out a chemical weapons attack. The UN commission found no evidence of Syrian government forces using chemical weapons, but did find evidence they had been used by the ‘rebels’. At the time, UN mission leader Carla del Ponte said, “our investigators have been in neighboring countries interviewing victims, doctors and field hospitals and... there are strong, concrete suspicions but not yet incontrovertible proof of the use of sarin gas, from the way the victims were treated... This was use on the part of the opposition, the rebels, not

The destroyed town of Kobani in Syria in January 2015.



by the government authorities.”

In 2012, CNN reported: “the United States and some European allies are using defense contractors to train Syrian rebels on how to secure chemical weapons stockpiles in Syria, a senior U.S. official and several senior diplomats told CNN Sunday... [t]he training, which is taking place in Jordan and Turkey, involves how to monitor and secure stockpiles and handle weapons sites and materials, according to the sources. Some of the contractors are on the ground in Syria working with the rebels to monitor some of the sites, according to one of the officials.”

In other words, the so-called ‘rebels’ – many of which are members or allies of al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations – not only possess chemical weapons, but have been trained in their use and handling by the United States!

ISIS is also known to possess chemical weapons – and use them widely. London-based intelligence group IHS Conflict Monitor reported last fall that ISIS had used chemical weapons at least 52 times in Iraq and Syria. Likely thousands of people have been killed or injured in these attacks, yet they have scarcely been reported on, or even acknowledged by the US government.

Exactly what occurred in Khan Sheikhun on April 4 is still unclear – and will remain so as long as the US and their allies continue to block an investigation. However, what *is* clear is that the US, via their proxies in ISIS and other terrorist

groups, who are in fact the ones using chemical weapons!

Deception and Manipulation

An overwhelming body of evidence and independent investigation shows that it is ISIS and the so-called ‘moderate rebels’, not the Syrian government, who have been using chemical weapons to attack civilians in Syria.

Yet the US government is twisting the facts, covering up the truth, and lying outright in an attempt to deceive peace-loving people into supporting bombing and further intervention in Syria. Ridiculously, Trump tried to appeal to our humanity by crying crocodile tears over the ‘beautiful babies’ killed in this alleged chemical attack.

But what about the beautiful babies and children killed in US air strikes in Syria? What about the 68 children in Aleppo who died horribly earlier this month after one of the US-supported ‘rebels’ lured them to his car with food before detonating a bomb? Do their lives matter less because they do not fit the US narrative of the ‘moderate rebels’ and the ‘brutal Syrian regime’?

And what about the children who are starving or suffering without adequate medical care in a country which only a few years ago had one of the best health care systems in the Middle East? What about the children whose right to education has been stolen from them in this war? What about little Alan Kurdi, the toddler whose body was found on a Greek beach after drowning in his family’s attempt to

flee the war? What about the thousands of other refugee children who have died like him in a desperate bid for safety?

And beyond Syria, what of the children in Iraq – the thousands who have died in bombings and the thousands more who have been born with horrible, painful birth defects from the US’ use of radioactive weapons?

What about the Afghan children, robbed of their entire childhood by the 16-year-long war?

Do not try to deceive us with your appeals to our humanity, Mr. Trump. We know that you and your administration – just like the Obama administration before you – are cold-blooded killers. We know that you will turn your back on these children should they and their families dare to come to the US as refugees.

We know your tactics are only meant to manipulate us, to try and deceive an American public and a world which is sick and tired of war into supporting yet another US military campaign.

What is the US Goal in Syria

The only objective that the US government cares about in Syria is their strategic goals for the region, which do not include protecting the lives of children or even stopping terrorism.

In fact, a declassified US intelligence report from 2012 reveals that the US government both predicted and encouraged the rise of ISIS. According to the report, “... there is the possibility of establishing a declared or undeclared Salafist Principality in eastern Syria (Hasaka and Der Zor), and this is exactly what the supporting powers to the opposition want, in order to isolate the Syrian regime, which is considered the strategic depth of the Shia expansion (Iraq and Iran).” The report defines the “supporting powers to the opposition” as “the West, Gulf countries, and Turkey”.

The US and their allies – including Canada – have spent at least hundreds of millions training, arming, and funding these brutal terrorist organizations in Syria, whom they call “moderate rebels”. The rise of ISIS and dozens of other groups like them in Syria was not an accident or a mistake by the US, but part of a plan to create chaos and division in Syria and turn it into a failed state. The US government and capitalist class would rather have the brutal terrorists of ISIS tearing Syria apart than see the stable and

Explosion in the eastern Damascus suburb of Ghouta, on March 8, 2015.



secular Syrian government remain in control. They see the Syrian government and its ally, Iran, as threats to US interests in the region because of their example as independent countries who have made gains for their citizens without bowing to US control.

The New Era of War and Occupation

The US war via their terrorist proxies in Syria is just one more front in the new era of war and occupation which began following the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre. The US along with their allies used this as their opportunity and justification for beginning a campaign of imperialist war and occupation to take control of or divide into chaos any country which stood independent of their control. As capitalism plunges into deeper and more frequent economic crises, imperialist countries such as the US, UK, Canada and others are trying to expand their control of resources and trade markets around the world to try and prevent total economic collapse and get an upper hand over rising global competitors such as Russia and China, which they see as threats to their political, military, and economic control of the world.

Building the Antiwar Movement

The United States government and their allies will not bring freedom or an end to terrorism in Syria – in fact, they are doing the exact opposite. The Syrian government is the only force in the country capable of putting an end to terrorism there. The future of their country must be left for the Syrian people and their government to decide – free from foreign intervention.

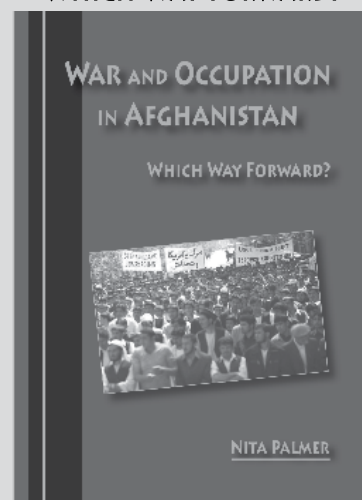
Imperialist countries such as the US and Canada have proven beyond a shadow of doubt that they do not care one bit about human rights, human lives, or even about stopping terrorism. They do not defend poor and working people in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan or even in their own countries. While they spend billions bombing countries and supporting terrorists abroad, health care, education, and infrastructure are crumbling and underfunded here at home.

This new era of war and occupation threatens to destroy the lives of people the world over. It is necessary and urgent for peace-loving people to come together to build a strong, united and effective anti-war movement to put an end to imperialist war and intervention in Syria and beyond.

Follow Nita Palmer on Twitter:
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**WAR AND OCCUPATION
IN AFGHANISTAN
WHICH WAY FORWARD?**



BY NITA PALMER

Nita Palmer is an author and researcher on the war in Afghanistan. She is a member of the editorial board of Vancouver, Canada-based social justice newspaper Fire This Time.

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U.S. Hands Off SYRIA!

The New Era of War & Occupation

Resist Imperialist War Mongering! • Oppose and Condemn US Missile Attack Against Syria! • Organize Against New US Direct War Drive in Syria! • US Stop Bombing Syria Now!

Statement by Mobilization Against War & Occupation - MAWO

April 6, 2017

Vancouver, Canada

Once again, the blood thirsty war machine of the US has begun to destroy, kill and shed the blood of innocent people, continuing their destruction of humanity through the new era of war and occupation which started by imposing war and occupation on Afghanistan in 2001.

On Thursday April 6 2017, US warships in the Mediterranean Sea sent more than 60 cruise missiles to Syria to punish the Syrian government for allegedly using chemical bombs against their own civilians. Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) strongly condemns this brutal and criminal attack on Syria and demands US immediately stop bombing Syria and get all US troops out of Syria.

The US, by attacking militarily and unilaterally a sovereign nation, Syria, which is a nation state member of the UN, committed not only a criminal act, but as well has undermined all

international laws established by the UN and the Geneva Convention. Therefore, the US itself is subject to a criminal conduct investigation for committing crimes against humanity.

This attack was not decided just recently. Rather, the US government, since the presidency of Barack Obama, has been waiting for an excuse and a bogus claim to attack Syria, because ISIS and all other terrorist groups are losing on the ground. In fact, this limited and ineffective attack by the US is really meant to slow down the Syrian government's progress in the war against terrorists, as well as to help ISIS and other terrorist groups to gain a position against Syrian government.

It is very obvious that the US and ISIS have emerged as one unit against the legitimate and elected government of President Bashar Assad. This criminal and ugly united front of the US and Daesh/ISIS must be exposed and condemned.

All observations and the course of the events are a clear indication that the US claim that

President Bashar Assad's government used chemical weapons against Syrian people in the city of Idlib is phony and bogus:

❶ The Syrian government has no chemical weapons. Syria completed the elimination of all chemical weapons material and equipment in the first half of 2014, under an agreement that was ratified and observed by Russia, US, EU and the UN, and is still monitored by International organizations.

❷ On April 5, 2017, one day before US cruise missile attack against Syria, at the UN Security Council, the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Mr. Kim Won-Soo, clearly stated, "However, the means of delivery of the alleged attack cannot be definitely confirmed at

this stage."

❸ One must think, why would the US in the middle of a UN investigation about this incident and the complete denial by the Syrian government of this act, rush to launch a cruise missile attack against Syria? Why would they do this when all indications from political and military facts are that the Syrian government has not committed this crime? It is obvious that US government is afraid that the result would be against the their own claim.

We call upon all progressive, antiwar and human loving organizations and individuals to step forward and unite to resist and fight back against this new bloody and criminal war drive by US government and their puppet allies.

Syrian People Will Win!

Hands Off Syria!

All US troops Out of Syria!

Stop Bombing, Sabotage and Sanctions Against Syria!

MONTHLY ANTIWAR RALLY & PETITION DRIVE

**US/CANADA/NATO
HANDS OFF!**



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NEW ERA OF WAR & OCCUPATION

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IMPERIALIST
AGGRESSION**

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URGENCY
OF
BUILDING
THE
ANTIWAR
MOVEMENT**

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**MAWO
MOBILIZATION AGAINST WAR + OCCUPATION**

Reinstate SFU's Aboriginal University Transition Programs!

By Tamara Hansen

During my undergrad years at Simon Fraser University, I recall attending at least two of the annual feasts held by the First Nations Student's Association (FNSEA) where they gave a symbolic report card to the university administration for its work with Aboriginal students. From my recollection, the grade was usually a C-, for minimally passing. One of the many reasons for this was the underrepresentation of Indigenous students at SFU.

In 2017, ten years later, we find ourselves in what is supposed to be a new epoch of university relations to Indigenous communities. It is the post-Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) era where the lessons of the past are supposedly learned. SFU even has an "Aboriginal Reconciliation Council" (ARC), whose mandate is, "to facilitate and support broad discussions

Indigenous People in Canada, Post-Secondary Education & the Need for Change

of how the 94 recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission will be addressed at the University." Consequently, "Simon Fraser University has committed \$9M toward a project or series of projects that will promote reconciliation within the SFU community."

Yet in April 2017, SFU abruptly announced it would be closing its two Aboriginal University Transition Programs (AUTP): The Aboriginal University Pre-Health Program and the Aboriginal University Prep Program (AUPP). This means an end to programs that help Indigenous students transition into university in

a supportive environment designed to blend Aboriginal knowledge with academic skills. One of the most frustrating aspects of the decision to close the program is that SFU had already allocated its funding for the 2017-2018 school year, and yet that cohort will not go ahead. It seems ludicrous, because even if SFU wants to suspend or change the AUTP, they have the funds to keep it in place to help students next year and use the year to explore other pathways.

The AUPP specifically has been running for six years and has assisted at least 80 students. This may not seem like a huge amount, however a CBC



article reports, “[AUPP Instructor Natalie] Knight says the program is capped at 12 students, and they were short by three students this year, and only one short the year before.” In addition, hundreds are coming to the defense of these programs, including SFU’s Department of Sociology and Anthropology. A first petition (on google doc) received 464 signatures, it has now been put on a more secure website, and collected an additional 200 signatures (there is a link at the end of this article). A blog has also been setup with some testimonials from alumni of the program.

Recalling the FNSA feasts I attended at SFU, I found an old 2004 article from SFU’s student newspaper the Peak about the third annual event. After giving the SFU administration a grade of C- the FNSA open letter explained, “Commitment to inclusive equality in educational opportunities is . . . a process and not an event . . . We also know that decreasing services, rather than increasing them, will not be a solution to meeting our goals of building for the future.” Decreasing services will not be a solution to meeting our goals? It seems 13 years and the administration at SFU remains oblivious to this rational and logical conclusion. One cannot cut programs in order to improve the situation for Indigenous students, you need to broaden and improve them!

An article in the Burnaby Now Newspaper, “SFU Criticized for Cutting Transition Program for Aboriginal Students,” explains, “The VP [SFU Vice President academic and provost, Peter Keller] maintained the university has tried hard to make

the program work, and the decision to cut the program was not a question of resources. [AUPP Instructor Natalie] Knight, however, disagreed. She argued the university could increase enrolment in the programs by putting more resources into recruitment and waiving the \$2,970 program tuition fee.” This program was by no means perfect; the tuition of nearly \$3,000 is definitely a barrier for many students. However, tuition is not the program’s shortcoming; tuition is an issue SFU could take care of in order to confront their apparent enrollment problem. Moreover, no one seems to be making the claim that the program is unsuccessful in its goal of transitioning students, so if it is working, why not work on ways to improve enrollment or investigate the causes of the problem. I have read five accounts from former students online and all have been positive, explaining how the program successfully helped prepare them for future studies.

No word on anyone in SFU’s administration bothering to ask why enrollment was down, and use that as a kick in the butt to do better. And “why” is really the crucial question. According to Statistics Canada

figures from 2011, only 9.8% of Canada’s Aboriginal population (self-identified First Nations, Metis & Inuit) holds a “University certificate, diploma or degree at bachelor level or above” compared to 26.5% of non-Aboriginal people in Canada. Many barriers prevent Indigenous people in Canada from attending post-secondary institutions. These barriers can take many forms: some are linked to the intergenerational trauma of residential schools; a lack of interest in post-secondary (often based on the injustices perpetrated by the education system in Canada against Indigenous people); the failure of the education system to reflect Indigenous languages, cultures, histories and realities; the underfunding/lack of on-reserve education facilities; the lack of physical and mental health services both on and off-reserve; as well as other factors. In addition to these obstacles, there are the barriers that face both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students across Canada: skyrocketing tuition fees, high cost of living, and the nagging question that once you have a degree, will there be any jobs available in your field?

Any of these factors could be contributing to the declining enrollment in AUPP programs. None of which the program was given a chance to investigate, assess, or change.

The time for change is now!

This spring season marks a convergence of events: 3 years since the closing of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada; Canada’s Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, will soon mark the halfway point in his mandate; and Canada is celebrating its 150th birthday.

The Truth and Reconciliation





Commission of Canada (TRC), uncovered for the average person, the criminal legacy of Canada's residential school system, which saw generations of Indigenous children stolen from their families and communities and forced into religious schools meant to "kill the Indian in the child". Two years ago, the TRC published a document with 94 "Calls to Action" in order to expose the truth of the legacy of residential schools and to promote 'reconciliation' between Aboriginal people and the government, as well as, non-Aboriginal people in Canada.

Yet we consistently see the need to improve formal post-secondary education numbers for Aboriginal people in Canada, and the need for serious education for non-Indigenous people. The need to expose the truth of Canada's colonial past & imperialist present is clear. However, the government is unwilling to make any changes beyond lip service and many people in Canada continue to expound racist and uneducated views about Indigenous people. Just a few examples that have been in the media over the past few months:

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's decision to eliminate all comment sections on articles related to Indigenous topics due to the amount of racist trolling their websites receive.

In March 2017, Conservative Senator Lynn Beyak defended the residential school system and insisted that negative

reports are overshadowing the stories of the "good deeds" accomplished by "well-intentioned" religious teachers. She expressed, "I speak partly for the record, but mostly in memory of the kindly and well-intentioned men and women and their descendants — perhaps some of us here in this chamber — whose remarkable works, good deeds and historical tales in the residential schools go unacknowledged for the most part."

The ongoing "debate" about whether or not the government's residential school system was a genocidal campaign against Indigenous people, when clearly, if one reads the United Nations definition of genocide, it was. No, not "cultural genocide", just "genocide". Yet Canada is not ready to stomach or admit to this objective fact. (Read definition here: <http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide.html>)

While the national Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women has finally begun after years of denial and delay, the families of missing and murdered Indigenous women are claiming the inquiry is not reaching out to them. The process is becoming mired in controversy and fear it will not actually hear the stories of those who have been fighting tooth and nail for this inquiry and waiting for answers from the government and police about their loved ones for decades.

Today in Canada more than 140 Aboriginal communities lack access to

safe drinking water. While the 2016 budget announced \$1.8 billion towards on-reserve water infrastructure over 5 years, in February 2017, the David Suzuki Foundation and the Council of Canadians released a report, "Glass Half Empty? Year 1 Progress Toward Resolving Drinking Water Advisories in Nine First Nations in Ontario". This report demonstrates that the Liberals are already behind on their promises and unless measures are taken now, the government will not meet its 5-year plan. This example is just the simple issue of

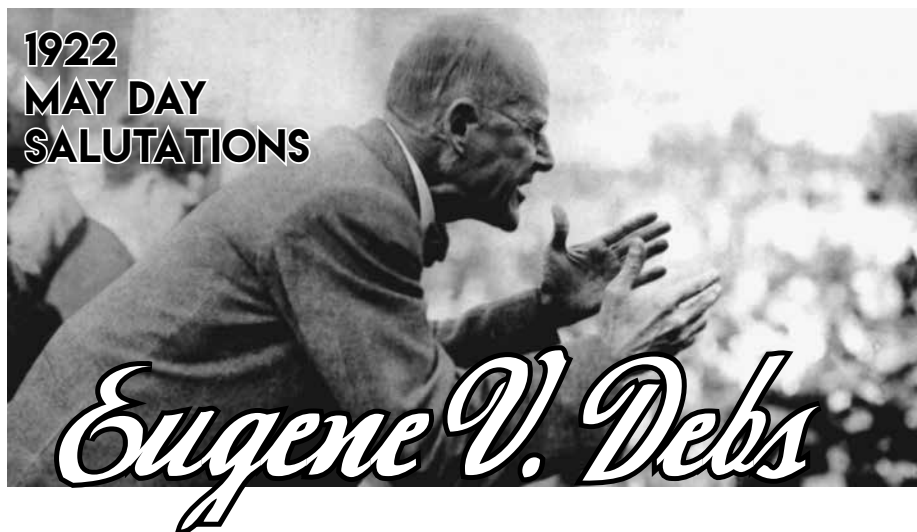
clean drinking water – not to mention the more complex ones: like implementing the 94 TRC Calls to action, improving access to education, housing, health, etc.

Finally the fact that Canada is getting ready to celebrate its 150 birthday is the cherry on top of this unappetizing cake. While it is true that many enjoy a standard of living in Canada unimaginable in other parts of the world, we must recognize that this is not due to the superiority of Canada, but the fact that all of this was established based on the suppression of the rights of others, Indigenous people and many other minorities. It is time for non-Indigenous people to commit to listen and learn from the beautiful and distinct First Nations, Metis and Inuit people of these lands. Part of this means opening space for Indigenous people where they have traditionally been excluded, like Canada's post-secondary institutions. We have a responsibility, at this time, to call specifically on SFU to reinstate its Aboriginal University Transition Programs, and to work with the Indigenous communities to create the post-secondary educational opportunities they would like to see, which are also free and accessible.

To sign the petition to reinstate AUTP at SFU please visit: <https://reinstatautp.wordpress.com>

*Follow Tamara Hansen on Twitter:
@THans01*

**1922
MAY DAY
SALUTATIONS**



May Day greeting by labour leader Eugene Debs, who had recently been released from prison for opposing World War I. A significant thinker, organizer and speaker, he was one of the fundamental early leaders of the labour movement in the United States – helping to found the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), the American Railway Union (ARU) and the Socialist Party.

Once more we celebrate May Day, the international holiday of the working class! With heads erect, with spirits undaunted, and with hearts attuned to the future we hail our proletarian comrades of all lands and send our greetings to the sons and daughters of toil all around the world.

For eight long years the revolutionary movement of the workers has been on trial for its life. It has withstood the fire and slaughter, the ruin and dissolution precipitated by capitalism, the archenemy of mankind, upon the world, and today it faces the future with its militant hosts once more in battle array, their crimson banners unfurled, and with supreme confidence in its power to conquer the forces of despotism and darkness and triumphantly fulfill its mission of emancipation.

The appalling savagery let loose by capitalism upon the world could but temporarily halt the majestic march of the revolutionary movement of the masses toward the dawn. It is true that its ranks were shaken in the fierce red tempest that swept and devastated the earth, but only that they might be reorganized more compactly and wrought of the sterner stuff of which invincible warriors are made.

Throughout the world the proletarian movement is today readjusting itself to the chaotic conditions created by the world upheaval. Capitalism is bankrupt and in ruins and socialism is mounting to power to rebuild the shattered social fabric and save civilization.

Internal differences growing out of the war are being composed, and the bitter antagonisms engendered during that tempestuous period are subsiding. All these tests and trials, however severe and costly, had to be met and overcome. It is in this process that the rank and file are tempered and fitted for their revolutionary mission, and before another year we shall have a more thoroughly unified, aggressive, and uncompromisingly revolutionary international than we ever had before.

When we come to see the process of events with clear eyes, with discerning vision and understanding hearts, we must realize that all things that come to pass, even the seemingly most adverse, feed the fires of revolt and foster the forces that make for the social revolution.

All hail, then, to the International Proletariat, to the industrial and political solidarity of the workers in the class struggle, and to the triumph of the social revolution throughout the world!

OUR HERITAGE



Rosa Luxemburg
Revolutionary Marxist Leader
1871-1919

Excerpt: The Idea of May Day on the March (1913)

MAY DAY

No wonder! The whole development, the whole tendency of imperialism in the last decade leads the international working class to see more clearly and more tangibly that only the personal stepping forward of the broadest masses, their personal political action, mass demonstrations, and mass strikes which must sooner or later open into a period of revolutionary struggles for the power in the state, can give the correct answer of the proletariat to the immense oppression of imperialistic policy. In this moment of armament lunacy and war orgies, only the resolute will to struggle of the working masses, their capacity and readiness for powerful mass actions, can maintain world peace and push away the menacing world conflagration. And the more the idea of May Day, the idea of resolute mass actions as a manifestation of international unity, and as a means of struggle for peace and for socialism, takes root in the strongest troops of the International, the German working class, the greater is our guarantee that out of the world war which, sooner or later, is unavoidable, will come forth a definite and victorious struggle between the world of labor and that of capital.

SAUDI ARABIA AND THE U.S. GIFT TO HUMANITY: ONE CHILD DIES EVERY TEN MINUTES IN YEMEN



By Azza Rojbi

On April 25, 2017, the United Nations (UN) held a daylong Yemen aid conference with the aim to collect pledges to fund its humanitarian efforts in Yemen. The conference raised about half of the \$2.1 billion sought by the UN to be able to provide some relief to the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. The UN secretary general António Guterres opened the conference with a report on the humanitarian disaster in Yemen “On average, a child under the age of five dies of preventable causes in Yemen every ten minutes. And this means fifty children in Yemen will die during today’s conference.”

This humanitarian crisis in Yemen is worsening daily as the Saudi-led bombing campaign continues against the country. Backed by the US, the Saudi-led coalition began its military campaign in Yemen in March 2015 under the pretense of bringing stability and legitimate government to Yemen. The Saudi-led coalition includes United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Senegal and Sudan.

It has been over two years now since the start of this criminal war against the people of Yemen. The promise of bringing stability and peace to the Yemeni people has never seen life. Saudi Arabia and the US failed in restoring their puppet government to power, therefore continuing their inhuman and criminal war on Yemen. It is clear that they never had the interests of the Yemeni people in mind. Their strategic goal is to



is to regain control over Yemen and expand their hegemony over North Africa and the Middle East.

Humanitarian Crisis Deepens

Saudi Arabia has imposed death and destruction on the people of Yemen.

Yemen’s Legal Center for Rights and Development, estimates the civilian death toll at 12,041, including 2,568 children and 1,870 women. The coalition airstrikes have bombed and destroyed schools, hospitals, roads, homes and other civilian infrastructure. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), fewer than 45% of health facilities in the country are fully functional and 14.8 million people have no access to health care services.

In addition to the constant bombing campaign, Saudi Arabia has imposed a naval, air and land blockade against Yemen. This blockade has created a shortage of food, medicine and fuel and made these vital necessities unreachable for a lot of people in Yemen. The blockade has also made it extremely difficult for humanitarian aid to reach those that desperately need it. According to the UN, the country is on the verge of famine as 17 million people need immediate food assistance. Children have been the most affected by the lack of food and resources, with 2.2 million children severely and acutely malnourished. UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen O’Brien described the situation in Yemen as becoming “the world’s worst

humanitarian disaster”.

US, UK, Canada are Funding & Backing Saudi Crimes

Saudi Arabia has been carrying on its inhuman and criminal war and blockade on Yemen with the full backing of the United States government and their imperialist allies. Since day one of the bombing campaign, the US has provided logistical, political and financial support to the Saudi-led coalition.

According to Military.com:

“Since April 2015, the Air Force has logged 1,778 tanker sorties for the operation, US Air Forces Central Command spokeswoman Capt. Kathleen Atanasoff told Military.com on Tuesday. That includes 1,069 over the past year, an increase of 360, or 50 percent, from the 709 in the previous period. “These operations are ongoing, with aircraft refueling occurring daily, Atanasoff said in an email.”

The Trump administration is continuing and escalating US involvement and support in Saudi crimes in Yemen. Trump approved the resumption of arms sales to Saudi Arabia and welcomed to the White House a Saudi delegation led by the Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin

Salman in March of this year for a series of meetings. Saudi military spokesperson General Ahmed Asiri told reporters in Washington, “What we heard was that they would increase cooperation in all the dimensions,” and that the stepped-up cooperation would likely involve “intelligence sharing, equipment, and training,” for Saudi pilots and troops.

The UK has also been playing a major role in supporting the Saudi-led coalition bombing campaign in Yemen. The Telegraph reported “British military advisers are in control rooms assisting the Saudi-led coalition staging bombing raids across Yemen”. The UK has also continued to arm the Saudi military, selling £3.3 billion worth of weapons to the kingdom since the bombing of Yemen began in March 2015.

Alongside the US and UK governments, Canada is also complicit in providing political and military support to Saudi Arabia. The Trudeau government approved a \$15 billion arms deal to provide light armored vehicles to Saudi Arabia. According to the Globe and Mail, “The light-armored vehicles, or LAVs, will be equipped with machine guns, medium- or high-caliber weapons or even big-barrel guns that can fire

105mm shells or anti-tank missiles.”

In Defense of Yemen: Hands off Yemen!

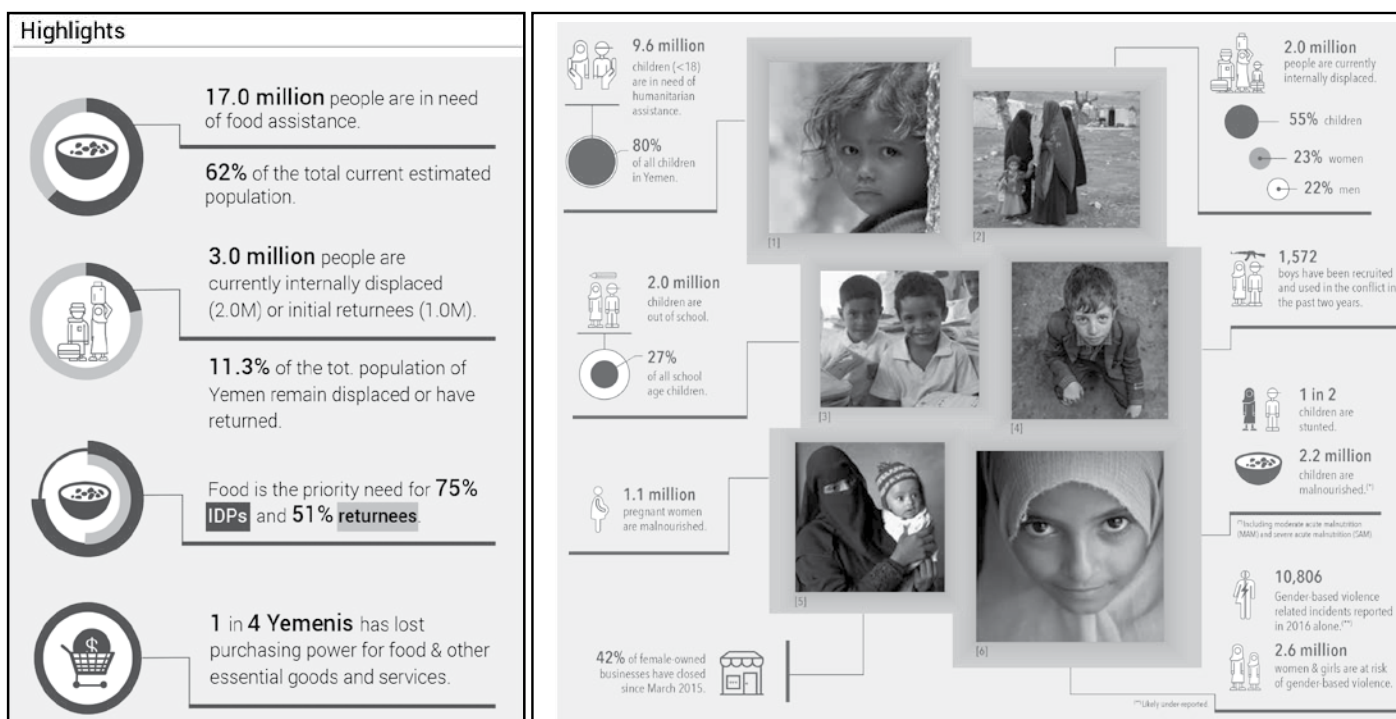
It is becoming more and more difficult for the Saudi-led coalition to continue justifying their hideous crimes against the people of Yemen. Despite all the death and destruction Saudi Arabia is imposing on them, the Yemeni people continue to show bravery and resistance to the Saudi aggressor. They are organizing and leading the fight on the ground and in social media to counter all the Saudi lies and defend their sovereignty and their beloved country.

Let's join the Yemeni people in exposing the atrocities committed by the US, Saudi Arabia and their allies in Yemen. Let's join the Yemeni people in fighting for their self-determination, sovereignty and human rights. A victory for the Yemeni people represents a victory for all oppressed and working people in the Middle East, North Africa and around the world.

US/Saudi Arabia Hands off Yemen!
Stop Bombing Yemen!
Lift the Naval, Air and Land Blockade on Yemen!

Follow Azza Rajbi on Twitter:
@Azza_R14

Yemen's Crisis in Numbers



Infographics taken from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, April & May 2017

REPEAL BILL C-51!

National Security Committee Recommendations Still Fail to Respect Our Basic Human Rights

By Thomas Davies

"A right is not what someone gives you; it's what no one can take from you."

Ramsey Clark, former US Attorney General and a founding member of International Action Center

Almost two years after the Liberals were elected on a promise of "Real Change Now", most people have completely given up on the "Now" part and are still wondering where the "Real Change" is. Nowhere is that more clear than in their promise to prioritize addressing our human rights concerns, especially about Bill C-51 - the controversial "anti-terrorism" law passed in 2015. Now a new report by the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security is recommending some changes, but does it really deal with our concerns?

Rewind to January 2015. At a campaign style news conference, Stephen Harper introduces a proposed new anti-terrorism law to protect people in Canada from what he calls, "the jihadis who would take away our freedoms." Known as Bill C-51, it would give massive new powers to police, secret police and government agencies to detain, "disrupt", share information, break laws, violate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, expand no-fly lists - all in the name of "national security" and all with increased secrecy. Large protests break out across Canada. The Conservatives rush the Bill through parliament with some weak amendments. Protests continue. The Liberals vote in favour of Bill C-51 but promise to prioritize dealing with "problematic elements" if elected. The Liberals are elected. CSIS, the RCMP and other agencies admit to using their new Bill C-51 powers but are not required to tell us how - so they do not. The Liberals speak about Bill C-51 as little as possible, then one year later organize a "public consultation" on "Public Safety and National Security" which lacks independence, transparency

and accountability. The Liberals continue to say as little about Bill C-51 as possible. Finally over two years later we get to the report.

Anywhere Would Be Up

None of the recommendations of the Committee involve increasing the powers of different police or government agencies. This isn't surprising given the level of power they were given under Bill C-51 and the amount of universal condemnation they faced because of this. The committee recommends:

- New security oversight infrastructure
- Stricter control on the use of preventative detention and CSIS' new powers of "disruption"
- Clearer language regarding the terms "terrorism offences in general", "terrorist propaganda" and "activity that undermines the security of Canada".
- Removal of CSIS's power to apply to violate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- That the government not pursue a proposed new broad telecommunications surveillance program

All of these look like steps in the right direction, but there are a few fundamental problems:

1. Just like the Conservative government before them, the Committee does not explain how the remaining measures from Bill C-51 would have prevented any of the very few previous terrorist attacks in Canada, or

would protect us from future attempts. We are again faced with unsubstantiated claims of a terrorist threat which is at a "medium" level, but we are never given any explanation as to how that "medium" level was decided upon.

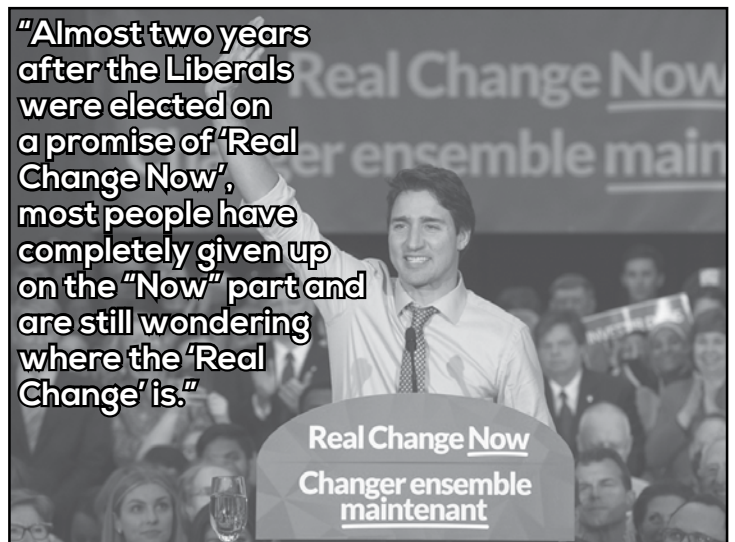
2. Even if the government adopted all 41 recommendations, we would still be left with less rights than before Bill C-51 was passed. The Committee actually recommends keeping the vast majority of the the new provisions under Bill C-51, just tweaking them. We are still faced with:

- New, undefined powers of "disruption" for CSIS which includes breaking laws.
- "Preventative detentions" with lower standards of justification and increased times that someone can be jailed without evidence
- Private information sharing between 17 different government agencies

Expanded No Fly-Lists

We are still faced with constant opportunities for police and government agencies to push the boundaries of human rights violations. There is still a lot of grey area even in the new language they can

"Almost two years after the Liberals were elected on a promise of 'Real Change Now', most people have completely given up on the 'Now' part and are still wondering where the 'Real Change' is."





use to try and justify their actions. We have also seen that even before Bill C-51 the many scandals of CSIS, RCMP and local police forces knowingly violating our privacy and human rights. They will continue to feel more empowered to do so as long as Bill C-51 remains a law.

3. The Committee was appointed, with an obvious majority of its members belonging to the ruling Liberal Party. It's recommendations are not binding. The actual public consultation process included only a few hours in a few larger cities, and then a hard to find online survey. The government had also promised to release the results of this survey. We have seen nothing.

4. An overall climate of fear and a chill on freedom of speech still continues. Many people are afraid to speak their minds or criticize government policies, and as Bill C-51's fundamental pillars of surveillance and punishment continue, that chill will only get worse.

It's Simple, Repeal it!

It never had to be this complicated. The Liberals didn't need to hide from the issues for two years or create a phoney public consultation that travelled across the country. The committee did not have to come up with 41 recommendations on how to try and fix a fundamentally broken law. All they needed to do was Repeal Bill C-51 from day one. Then if they wanted to have an honest discussion about the balance between human rights and freedoms with the general, they could have initiated one in good faith.

What is most clear is that the basic flaw in both the Liberal and Conservative government's ideas about human rights is that they see them as obstacles to security. We believe strongly that history, and common sense show that enhancing

human rights is not only necessary, but also beneficial to the security and safety of all people. When people are respected, included and able to live in peace they have no reason to attack anyone. This myth of people "detesting our freedoms" is inflated propaganda.

History and common sense also show that no significant gains have been made for human rights without people standing up and working together. We need to continue to do the same thing against Bill C-51. Our demand for a full Repeal of Bill C-51 still remains. They have given us no real reason to give it up. We also continue to demand for an Independent Public Inquiry into Bill C-51. If they are

so confident that their increased security measures are justifiable, why would they be afraid of the public taking a look to decide for themselves?

So let's continue to educate, organize and mobilize against Bill C-51. They may try and tell us that two steps forward is progress after pushing us 10 steps back, but we know better. There is no such thing as "partial" human rights, and no government has the right to try and take them away.

**REPEAL BILL C-51!
OUR SECURITY LIES IN
DEFENDING THE RIGHTS OF
ALL!
CALL FOR AN INDEPENDENT
PUBLIC INQUIRY**

*Follow Thomas Davies on Twitter:
@thomasdavies59*



By Thomas Davies

We Are Demanding Full Repeal of Bill C-51

As the season changed from winter to spring, the Working Group to Stop Bill C-51 continued its consistent campaign to demand a full repeal of Bill C-51. The campaign took advantage of the longer days and nicer weather to connect with as many people as possible through four more actions. The total is now 111 actions in more than 2 years of organizing!

The return of bi-weekly banner drops had found many appreciative drivers, cyclists and pedestrians. During a recent rush hour banner drop over the busy Highway 1, there was 186 vehicles that honked in 1 hour – a new record!

The picket and petition drives continue to be an important opportunity for public education. The table is always busy as many people stop by to ask questions about what Bill C-51 is, or the specifics of how it works. Others also return weeks and months later to ask for the latest updates in the campaign.

Canada has dropped 14 points on the Press Freedom Index since Prime Minister Justin Trudeau took office. It's another indication that despite all the promises and smiling photos – the Liberal government continues to show a blatant disregard for democratic and human rights. The campaign to Repeal Bill C-51 is at the heart of the overall fight for human rights in Canada, and must be continued and amplified until the unjust and unnecessary law is repealed in full!



STRIKE!

PALESTINIANS FIGHT BACK AGAINST BRUTAL ISRAELI OCCUPATION

By Noah Fine

A strike has been spreading through the Palestinian territories like a wild fire over the last two weeks. On April 16, 2017 Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli jails began a mass hunger strike in protest of the poor and deteriorating conditions Palestinians are subject to in Israeli custody.

Some 1,500 Palestinian prisoners are participating in the strike taking only water and salt as sustenance. History has shown the devastating effects of participating in hunger strikes for the individuals involved. Serious health consequences and death have been too often a result. But for a people with no options left, this last resort of peaceful protest must become an international issue which brings about an end to the suffering of Palestinian prisoners and the freedom of all Palestinian political prisoners.

Why they Strike?

The living standards and conditions of Palestinians in the West Bank and especially Gaza, known as the worlds largest open-air prison, are dismal as-is. The conditions for the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians that have been subject to Israeli confinement is even worse.

According to Palestinian human rights

organization Addameer over 40% of the male population of the Palestinian territories have been confined or imprisoned by Israel. This huge number begins to make sense when you learn that in 2015 Israel approved 20-year prison terms for Palestinians, regardless of their age, if they are caught throwing a stone.

Some of the demands forwarded by the striking prisoners according to prominent Palestinian leader and political prisoner, Marwan Barghouti, include: Torture, denial of medical treatment, and hundreds of Palestinians who have been killed while in Israeli custody. Another large aspect of their protest is as Barghouti wrote in an opinion piece in the New York Times in which he explains the reason for the strike, "Israel has built nearly all of its prisons inside Israel rather than in the occupied territory. In doing so, it has unlawfully and forcibly transferred Palestinian civilians into captivity, and has used this situation to restrict family visits and to inflict suffering on prisoners through long transports under cruel conditions. It turned basic rights that should be guaranteed under international law — including some painfully secured through previous hunger strikes — into privileges its prison service decides to grant us or deprive us of."

In retaliation to the strike Israeli authorities have placed leading strikers including

Barghouti into solitary confinement and have cracked down on the few privileges left to other striking prisoners.

According to Addameer there are currently 6300 Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli jails. That includes 61 female prisoners, 300 children and over a dozen members of Palestinian government.

The Strike Grows

In the past couple of weeks since the strike began it has become an integral part of the Palestinian peoples quest for human rights and self-determination. Palestinians living in the West Bank, Gaza and inside Israel itself have joined the call for solidarity with the striking prisoners. Mass protests and a general strike that shut down the West Bank have all been part of the solidarity. Other solidarity actions have taken place around the world organized by Palestinians, Jews and their allies in support of the hunger strikers and attempting to spread the message of the Palestinian people.

The plight of the Palestinian political prisoners must be heard and supported by all who believe in peace and freedom. The hunger strike led by Palestinian political prisoners does not end at only improving the living conditions of those unjustly held in Israeli dungeons. The strike represents the



Protest in Gaza City in support of Palestinian prisoners who began a mass hunger strike in Israeli jails on 17 April, Palestinian Prisoners Day. Ashraf Amra APA images

Palestinian people aspirations for liberation from the brutal Israeli occupation.

The Solution Must Confront the Problem

The nature of Palestinian political prisoners from the very core is a result of Israeli occupation. If Israel did not occupy, expand and terrorize Palestinian people, there would be no Palestinian political prisoners for there would be no need for Palestinians to fight an occupying power.

Both Palestinians and Israelis deserve a life of peace and security. The reality is however that there can be no peace and security for either side under occupation. The reality that Palestinians and Jews must come together to bring an end to the occupation becomes more apparent each day. The big block to progress in this case is not Palestinians protesting for their human rights, it is the Zionist state of

Israel which denies their human rights and in so doing, endangers the lives of Israelis living on occupied Palestine.

This hunger strike should be seen as a call for Jews and Palestinians to unite in a single state of Palestine where each individual has the right to vote and together shape the future of a democratic and secular country of Palestine. In this day in age we must come to understand that much more can be achieved by coming together and uniting then by destruction and dividing.

Free Marwan Barghouti Now!

Free all Palestinian Political Prisoners!

Right of Return for all Palestinian!

End the Colonial Occupation of Palestine by Israel!

Follow Noah Fine on Twitter: @noahfine



Palestinians rally in solidarity with prisoners on hunger strike in the West Bank city of Nablus, 23 April, Ayman Ameen APA images

FREE ALL PALESTINIAN YOUTH FROM PRISON

Hundreds of Palestinian Youth Political Prisoners in Israel

By Max Tennant

On March 7, 2017, Israeli soldiers detained eight Palestinian youth, one of whom is a minor, for protesting the murder of well-known Palestinian activist Basel al-Araj by Israeli forces. This situation is a daily occurrence for Palestinian youth today. There have been over 1,800 youth, including some minors, killed and 8,000 arrested since 2000 by Israeli authorities. As of April 2016, over 694 Palestinian youth, including 414 minors, are in Israeli prisons.

In Israeli prisons Palestinian youth face indefinite imprisonment and inhumane and deplorable conditions. Nearly 60% of Palestinian child prisoners are transferred from the West Bank and Gaza to Israeli prisons which, due to restrictions of movement for Palestinians from West Bank and Gaza to Israel, makes visits from parents and families nearly impossible. This is not only against International law, including the Geneva Convention, but it is inhuman and prevents children and their families from visiting while in prison. This horrible situation by itself has created huge concern, stress, and anxiety among these children and their families. The inhumane condition in prisons, as well as the physical and psychological torture, has been the subject of much criticism and protest by international human rights organizations and institutions, including the United Nations and many Israeli progressive and human rights organizations.

The Palestinian population is very young. 70% of the Palestinian population is under the age of 30 and 30% of Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza are between the ages of 15-29. Youth are the vanguard of the Palestinian struggle against Israeli colonial occupation. The fight of Palestinian youth for the self-determination and sovereignty of Palestine has been consistent since the occupation of Palestine in 1948. Young people and the children of Palestine, generation after generation, are fighting for the liberation of Palestine. They have been the vanguard of this movement and their heroic struggle against oppression and occupation has set an example for all other liberation movements around the world. Palestinian youth, regardless of difficult living conditions and an insufficient education and health care system in Gaza and West Bank, have continued to advance in many fields of art and science. At the same time their heroic struggle and sacrifice has shown there is no chance for Israel to win. Their presence for decades on the streets of Palestine and Israel for the liberation of Palestine from the occupation of Israeli Zionist regime is a good proof that Palestinians can win and a new world without oppression and suppression is possible.

Free All Palestinian Youth Prisoners!
Free All Palestinian Political Prisoners in Israel!



**"GET UP, STAND
UP, CLIMATE
JUSTICE NOW!"**

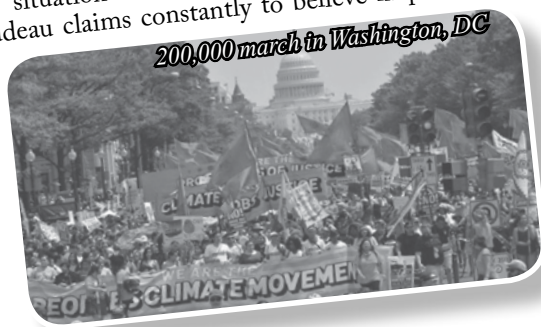
**VANCOUVER JOINS MASSIVE DEMONSTRATIONS
OPPOSING TRUMP AND TRUDEAU'S ANTI-
PEOPLE, ANTI-PLANET POLICIES**

Mother nature wanted to be sure people were really serious about saving her on April 29, and we showed again that we are. Despite an incredible rain storm, over 1000 people took to the streets in Vancouver for a loud and diverse mobilization which focused on urgent climate justice issues at home and abroad. We joined over one million people in 370 sister "People's Climate Mobilizations" in the United States and Canada.

The largest mobilization was of 200,000 people in Washington, DC, where they marched to the White House to protest Donald Trump's 100th day as President. The initial call to mobilize was made in response to Trump's clear anti-planet agenda, as he scrapped environmental protection measures, appointed a climate change denier to be head of the Environmental Protection Agency, forced through approval of Dakota Access pipeline, and tried to revive the dead Keystone XL pipeline.

"Hey Hey, Trudeau, Kinder Morgan has Got to Go!"

What was originally a national call became international as organizers in Canada recognized the urgency of the situation here as well. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau claims constantly to believe in protecting the



**"HEY HEY, TRUDEAU,
KINDER MORGAN
HAS GOT TO GO!"**

environment and respecting indigenous rights – yet he has approved the Kinder Morgan and Line 3 pipelines, as well as many other dangerous resource extraction projects which contradicts those claims directly. The latest broken promise was an announcement that Canada would now delay its commitments to tackling methane emissions from the Alberta Tar Sands for another 2 years.

No wonder that groups across Canada, including next door to the tar sands in Edmonton Alberta, decided to take to the streets demanding, "Jobs, Justice and Climate." The reality is, under Trump and Trudeau we get are getting none of the above...

In Vancouver, the Climate Convergence coalition initiated the national call-out which helped bring together different organizations from coast to coast, as well as a large group of endorsers to the Vancouver climate mobilization including grassroots organizations, environmental NGOs, trade unions, faith and student groups.

"Christy Clark, We Say No, Site C Dam has Got to Go!"

The diversity was apparent in those who showed up for the rally and stuck it out through the rain. Led by indigenous activists, their drums, and a big banner which said, "Climate Justice Now!" the route marched from the iconic Science World before taking over one of the main bridges into downtown. Significantly it stopped in front of the BC Hydro building as Fight C organizer and hereditary Chief Gordon August outlined the many reasons to be opposed to BC Hydro's Site C Hydroelectric Dam - which Premier Christy Clark is trying to force through.

"NO MORE PIPELINES, NO MORE TANKERS! POWER TO THE PEOPLE - NOT THE BANKERS!"



people walking downtown joined in. It continued through downtown with the chants ringing off the buildings until it arrived at its final destination.

"Hey Trump, Trudeau, No More Pipelines, We Say No!"



"CHRISTY CLARK, WE SAY NO, 'SITE C' DAM HAS GOT TO GO!"

A recent University of British Columbia study showed that the 9 billion project will be completely uneconomical and unnecessary. This on top of the obvious fact that it is opposed by local indigenous nations and would ruin over 57,000 acres of agricultural and forested land.

"No More Pipelines, No More Tankers, Power to the People, Not the Bankers!"

The march then continued to the TD Bank Tower and took over the intersection in front. Judy Wilson, Chief of the Neskonlith Indian Band and Secretary-Treasurer of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, made clear the broad indigenous opposition to the Kinder Morgan pipeline and to TD's role as the principle investment broker for Kinder Morgan for the pipeline expansion. Kinder Morgan has a June 30 deadline to secure the financing for the project or risk its cancellation.

At this point marchers had been outside in the rain and wind for over 2 hours, but the chanting continued and the march actually grew larger and louder as many



What is becoming clearer to more and more people every day is that climate change is an urgent issue. It is also clearer every day that there is a distinct line between capitalist governments and corporations on one side, and the vast majority of people around the world on the other. Their constant efforts to maximize profits above the well being of people as well as planet places all of our lives at risk. We need to keep up the pressure and keep up actions like the People's Climate Mobilizations - bringing people together so we can feel the strength of working together for common interests. Connecting local struggles to an international movement. We have everything to lose and a whole world to win, so let's fight like it!

People and Planet Before Pipelines and Profit!

System Change Not Climate Change!



NORTH KOREA'S

ANTIDOTE TO U.S. WAR

By Manuel Yepe*

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), North Korea, or Communist Korea is one of the most systematic targets of the pejorative and slanderous propaganda carried out by capitalist-controlled media at a global scale. But the DPRK has never succumbed to Washington's intimidation. This has generated, around the world, admiration for the very fact of its survival; and solidarity for the courage with which it faces so much negative propaganda.

Pyongyang has never shown signs of wavering in the face of such threats and, on the contrary, it has even dared

to develop a reduced arsenal of nuclear

with crippling economic sanctions; and has installed lethal missile systems and military bases on its doorstep." "Negotiations aren't possible," says Whitney, because Washington refuses to sit down with a country which it sees as its inferior. Instead, the US has strong-armed China to do its bidding by using their diplomats as interlocutors who are expected to convey Washington's ultimatums as threateningly as possible. The hope, of course, is that Pyongyang will cave in to Uncle Sam's bullying and do what they are told."

"There's no country in the world that needs nuclear weapons more than North Korea. Brainwashed Americans, who get their news from FOX or CNN, may

differ on this point, but if a hostile nation deployed carrier strike-groups off the coast of California while conducting massive war games on the Mexican then they might see things differently. They might see the value of having

a few nuclear weapons to deter that hostile nation from doing something really stupid."



"Washington has never made any effort to conceal its contempt for North Korea. In the 64 years since the war ended, the US has done everything in its power to punish, humiliate and inflict pain on the Communist country."

weapons for self-defence in the event that the United States tries to assert its dominance by launching another war like the one it carried out in the 1950s.

In the wake of the most recent US military provocations against North Korea and the usual firmness of its replies, the US journalist Mike Whitney has published a comprehensive article in the digital magazine Counterpunch recalling that:

"Washington has subjected the DPRK to starvation; it has prevented its government from accessing foreign capital and markets; it has strangled its economy

According to Whitney, "the only reason Kim Jong Un hasn't joined Saddam and Gadhafi in the great hereafter, is because the DPRK has the capacity to reduce Seoul, Okinawa and Tokyo into smoldering debris-fields. Absent Kim's WMDs, Pyongyang would have faced a pre-emptive attack long ago and Kim would have faced a fate similar to Gadhafi's. "Nuclear weapons are the only known antidote to US adventurism," says the journalist.

"In the early 1950s, during the Korean War, the US dropped more bombs on North Korea than it had dropped in the entire Pacific theater during World War II. This carpet bombing, which included

32,000 tons of napalm, often deliberately targeted civilian as well as military targets. Whole cities were destroyed, with many thousands of innocent civilians killed and many more left homeless and hungry."

Like Vietnam, the Korean War was just another muscle-flexing exercise the US periodically engages in whenever it gets

The United States killed over 2 million people in a country that posed no threat to US national security.

bored or needs some far-flung location to try out its new weapons systems. The US had nothing to gain in its aggression on the Korean peninsula. "In the US, most people think the problem lies with North Korea, but it doesn't," explains Whitney. "The problem lies with the United States; it's unwillingness to negotiate an end to the war, its unwillingness to provide basic security guarantees to the North, its unwillingness to even sit down with the people who –through Washington's own stubborn ignorance– are now developing long-range ballistic missiles that will be capable of hitting American cities. According to Whitney, "relations with the North can be normalized, economic ties can be strengthened, trust can be restored, and the nuclear threat can be defused. The situation with the North does not have to be a crisis, it can be fixed. It just takes a change in policy, a bit of give-and-take, and leaders that genuinely want peace more than war.

** Manuel E. Yepe is a lawyer, economist and journalist. He is a professor at the Higher Institute of International Relations in Havana. He was Cuba's ambassador to Romania, general director of the Prensa Latina agency; vice president of the Cuban Institute of Radio and Television; founder and national director of the Technological Information System (TIPS) of the United Nations Program for Development in Cuba, and secretary of the Cuban Movement for the Peace and Sovereignty of the Peoples.*

www.englishmanualeyepe.wordpress.com
A CubaNews translation.

Edited by Walter Lippmann.
www.walterlippmann.com

ANTÍDOTO NORCOREANO

PARA LA GUERRA YANQUI

Por Manuel Yepe*

La República Popular Democrática de Corea, Corea del Norte o Corea Comunista es uno de los blancos más sistemáticos de la propaganda peyorativa e injuriosa que acometen los medios que, a escala global controla el capitalismo.

Pero la RPDC no ha sucumbido nunca a las intimidaciones de Washington y esto le ha generado admiración, por el hecho mismo de su supervivencia, y solidaridad, por la valentía con que enfrenta tanta propaganda en su contra en todo el mundo.

Pyongyang jamás ha dado muestras de flaquear ante tamañas amenazas y, por el contrario, hasta se ha atrevido a desarrollar un reducido arsenal de armas nucleares para defenderse en caso de que Estados Unidos intente afirmar su dominio lanzando otra guerra como la que llevó a cabo en los años cincuenta.

A raíz de las más recientes provocaciones militares de Estados Unidos contra Norcorea y la habitual firmeza de las respuestas de ésta, el periodista norteamericano Mike Whitney ha publicado un enjundioso artículo en la revista digital Counterpunch recordando que “Washington nunca ha hecho esfuerzo alguno por ocultar su desprecio por Corea del Norte en los 64 años transcurridos desde que terminó la guerra y, en cambio, ha hecho todo lo posible para castigar, humillar y causar dolor en el país comunista”.

Washington ha sometido a la RPDC a la inanición, ha impedido que su gobierno tenga acceso a mercados y a capital extranjero, estranguló su economía con paralizantes sanciones económicas y hasta le ha instalado sistemas de misiles letales y bases militares en la puerta de su propia casa.

Las negociaciones no tienen lugar —observa Whitney— porque Washington se niega a sentarse con un país que considera inferior. Ahora, Estados Unidos ha acudido a China para solicitarle que transmita a Norcorea, a modo de ultimátum, una oferta que partiría del abandono de su programa nuclear, con la ilusoria espe-

ranza de que Pyongyang cediera a la intimidación.

No hay ningún país en el mundo que necesite más que Corea del Norte las armas nucleares. Cualquier estadounidense, con su cerebro lavado por las noticias de FOX o CNN que cotidianamente recibe, difiere de este punto de vista, pero si ocurriera que una nación hostil desplegara fuerzas de combate frente a las costas de California al tiempo



que realiza juegos masivos de guerra en la frontera con México, sin duda vería las cosas diferentemente. Tendría que reconocer el valor positivo de poseer armas nucleares para disuadir a esa nación hostil de hacer algo realmente estúpido”.

Según Whitney, la única razón por la que Kim Jong Un no ha corrido la misma suerte que Saddam Hussein y Muamar el Gadafi, es porque Corea del Norte tiene la capacidad de reducir a Seúl, Okinawa y Tokio a escombros. Sin armas de destrucción masiva, Pyongyang habría tenido que afrontar un ataque preventivo hace mucho tiempo y Kim Jong Un habría enfrentado un destino similar al de Gadafi. “Las armas nucleares son el único antídoto conocido para las aventuras de Estados Unidos”, precisa el periodista.

“En la temprana década de 1950, durante la guerra de Corea, Estados Unidos lanzo

más bombas sobre Corea del Norte que las que habían caído en el teatro de guerra del Pacífico entero durante la segunda guerra mundial. Estos bombardeos contra objetivos tanto civiles como militares, que incluyeron 32.000 toneladas de napalm, destruyeron ciudades enteras con muchos miles de civiles inocentes muertos y muchos más dejados sin hogar y hambrientos”.

Estados Unidos mató a más 2 millones de personas en un país que no planteó ninguna amenaza a la seguridad nacional de los Estados Unidos.

Como la de Vietnam, la guerra de Corea fue un ejercicio muscular en el que Estados Unidos periódicamente participa cada vez que se aburre o necesita algún pretexto para probar sus nuevos sistemas de armas.

Estados Unidos no tenía nada que ganar en su agresión en la península

coreana.

Mucha gente piensa en Estados Unidos —dice Whitney— que el problema de las tensiones en la península coreana reside en la política de Corea del Norte, pero no es así. Es en Estados Unidos donde está el problema: la falta de voluntad para negociar un fin a la guerra, su falta de voluntad para proporcionar garantías de seguridad básica a Corea del Norte, su falta de voluntad incluso para sentarse con las personas que, motivados por tan obstinada ineptitud de Washington, están desarrollando en Norcorea misiles balísticos de largo alcance capaces de alcanzar ciudades de Norteamérica.

Según Whitney, las relaciones de Estados Unidos con Corea del Norte pudieran normalizarse, pueden reforzarse los lazos económicos, puede restaurarse la confianza y desactivarse la amenaza nuclear. Sólo se requiere un cambio en la política, un poco de negociación y líderes que genuinamente quieran la paz más que la guerra.

**Manuel E. Yepe Menendez es periodista y se desempeña como Profesor adjunto en el Instituto Superior de las Relaciones Internacionales de La Habana.*

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WORKERS OF THE WORLD

AS LONG AS THE STRUGGLE OF THE WORKERS AGAINST
THE BOURGEOISIE & THE RULING CLASS CONTINUES, AS
LONG AS ALL DEMANDS ARE NOT MET, MAY DAY WILL
BE THE YEARLY EXPRESSION OF THESE DEMANDS
-ROSA LUXEMBURG



UNITE!

U.S. HANDS OFF VEN EZU ELA

*Interview by Cindy Sheehan
with Fire This Time
Editorial Board Member
Alison Bodine*

Transcription by Alison Bodine

The following interview with Alison Bodine, the Coordinator of the Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign by prominent U.S. antiwar and social justice activist and "Peace Mom" Cindy Sheehan first aired on the Cindy Sheehan's Soapbox" radio on April 27, 2017. To hear the below interview, as well as for other interesting and informative podcasts and articles, please visit <http://cindysheehanssoapbox.blogspot.ca/>

Cindy Sheehan is an American social justice organizer whose son, Casey Sheehan, was killed during the Iraq War. She attracted national and international media attention in August 2005 for her extended antiwar protest

Mass march in support of the revolutionary government of Venezuela, Caracas - April 19, 2017



Supporter of the revolutionary government of Venezuela holds a sign against Luis Almagro, the reactionary General Secretary of the OAS

at a camp outside then President George W. Bush's Texas ranch. She has continued to be very active in many social justice movements including traveling to Venezuela and Cuba and writing the book, "Revolution, a Love Story: A Better World is Possible" about Venezuela.

Welcome back to the Soapbox, I'm your host Cindy Sheehan. This week we will be speaking with antiwar and social justice activist, writer and researcher Alison Bodine. Alison particularly is well-informed about what is going on in Venezuelan current events and trends in Latin America, so stay-tuned and we will be right back with Alison Bodine.

Cindy: Alison Bodine, welcome back to Cindy Sheehan's Soapbox.

Alison: Thank you, very happy to be here with you this morning Cindy.

Cindy: Well, thank you. You're what I consider my house expert on what is happening in Venezuela and what is going on, and Venezuela and the people of Venezuela are something that is very important to be and I think that it should be important to everybody because it's kind-of a microcosm of what is happening around the world but it is also something that we who consider ourselves revolutionary socialists in the United States we can look at Venezuela, especially the beginnings of the Bolivarian

Revolution and be inspired by the energy and the love of Hugo Chavez, the former President who passed away. The love of him for his people and for the history and the culture and the country of Venezuela. And then, in return the energy and love of the people towards him. So, I just really love Venezuela, but I hate what the US, and the US-sponsored Organization of American States is doing to the people of Venezuela.

Alison: Yeah, I agree with you Cindy, that is a lot about why I have been inspired by Venezuela. We are now in the 19th year actually of the Bolivarian Revolution. It really has been an incredible change for poor, working and oppressed people in Venezuela. But, that inspiration, the way that the Venezuelan Bolivarian Revolution has really joined with other countries across Latin America and the Caribbean, with revolutionary Cuba and then other countries joining in. I think that that really is the motivation for these US sponsored threats against Venezuela, for the United States' attempts to destabilize the country, to overthrow President Nicolas Maduro today is really to try to isolate that influence that revolutionary Venezuela has had on so many millions of people, and I think that is the crux of what we are talking about when we discuss reasons for US intervention in Venezuela.

Cindy: Well, poor Nicloas Maduro. I mean

he really stepped in to huge shoes. He had enormous shoes to fill from Chavez who was beloved and who did have incredible energy to fulfil the wishes of the Venezuelan people. Because the Venezuelan Constitution was written by the people, and the only way that it can be amended is by the people. So, Maduro had these enormous shoes to fill, and he really has been an embattled from within and without, hasn't he?

Alison: Yes. It is years of an economic war. Really the United States and the capitalist class in Venezuela saw the fall in oil prices, which was dramatic which we know and we have all noticed as an opportunity to increase their attacks and to begin using the economy to try to convince the people of Venezuela to overthrow their government and reverse the gains of the Bolivarian Revolution. The economic war that President Maduro, the United Socialist Party of Venezuela and all the mechanisms of the Bolivarian Revolution have been fighting against, has manifested itself in different ways. It has manifested itself through hoarding by Venezuela's major corporations.

One thing that the mainstream media constantly leaving out, is that when they talk about shortages in Venezuela, they do not recognize that it is the counter-revolutionary opposition and the capitalist class in Venezuela that controls



Alison Bodine, Coordinator of the Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign speaks at a protest outside of the US Consulate in Vancouver, Canada

most of the production and distribution of food and basic items in Venezuela. The media will talk about the shortage of corn flour in Venezuela, but not recognize that the companies that produce that have actually reduced their production and have been found to be hoarding massive amounts of this basic foodstuff in order to essentially starve the people of Venezuela. There are many reports that you can read online about, you know, in the rich areas of Venezuela you can go and find all the corn flour, cheese milk, that you would

also a major issue with smuggling. In Venezuela, one of the big gains of the Bolivarian Revolution was to make these basic goods affordable to people, and so the prices went down on the shelves. There are many corrupts and opportunists who are buying these basic goods at subsidized prices, and then smuggling them into Colombia and selling them at much higher price. These corrupt people are making massive amounts of money off the backs of the working and poor people of Venezuela.

like, when at the same time there are people standing in long lines outside of government sponsored grocery stores, or just the store down the street waiting for basic goods. There has been hoarding, there has been price gouging, there is

There is this economic war, which as I said is taking advantage of the drop in oil prices, in order to try to further strangle the Venezuelan economy. And then, there is the United States, which at the same time and in conjunction with these attacks, has a few years ago, in 2015, and then again in 2016, both under US President Barack Obama, issued an executive order that declared Venezuela to be an extraordinary threat to the national security of the United States.

Cindy: That's so crazy. Just on the face value of it, it is just lunacy.

Alison: Thousands of miles away, Caracas is something like 3,000 miles away from Washington, DC, the US military is of course stationed just off the coast of Venezuela, and yet somehow Venezuela and the 30 million people there are a threat to the United States.

The real impact of this has been that it has allowed the US Congress to continue and to increase their sanctions against Venezuela because the country has been given this status through an executive order. Also, the moves of the US function to scare away international creditors. So, Venezuela is going through a crisis, they have experienced a lack of revenue due to the drop in oil prices, something that many countries around the world may experience, while that the same time



Mass march in support of the revolutionary government of Venezuela and President Nicolas Maduro, Caracas, Venezuela - April, 2017

they have been cut-off from international funding to help them get through the crisis, by the US government essentially. That has been another leg of the economic war against the people.

Then, I would say that Maduro has also been facing, as President of Venezuela, constant US threats. Especially in the last few months, let's say since February. There was a letter written by US Congress, some of the most notorious, definitely, including Ted Cruz, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, people that have been fighting against the Cuban Revolution. 34 members of US Congress signed a letter in February, essentially calling on the US government to "do more." To sanction, and to put international pressure on Venezuela to change their system. They framed it, of course, in terms of human rights, democracy, but these terms, whether we look at Libya, or Syria, or Iraq, or even the US' own history in Latin America, is not what the US is concerned about.

Cindy: Well speaking of the US Congress. I knew I didn't like Bernie Sanders before, but when he called Chavez a "dead communist dictator," that was the red-line in the sand for me. I knew that I could never support anybody who claimed to be a socialist but, who denounced in the most vicious and inflammatory terms somebody who was actually working towards a socialist future. You know somebody, I wouldn't say Chavez was, you know I don't think Venezuela was completely socialist, but was certainly working towards that. I was so upset when Sanders said that about him. The dictator part is what really bothered me because like you said, they couch these things in terms of democracy, but I met with Chavez one time, and he said, I think it was the President of Brazil at the time, told Chavez that "Chavez has an excess of democracy."

There are always elections there and they have always been certified to be completely legitimate.

Alison: That is what has been so hypocritical about recent events

especially. Since April the Organization of American States has been especially used by the United States to further attack Venezuela. The Organization of American States represents countries in the Caribbean and Latin America, and includes the United States and Canada, so it is a regional body. It has existed since the 1940's, really discredited throughout Latin America especially, a history of, for example, completely supporting, and

months, the new general secretary of this organization, a man named Luis Almagro, really proving himself to be a United States puppet. He is completely obsessed with Venezuela, if you look at his social media accounts, his public statements, trying to condemn Venezuela for being "undemocratic," for violating something that the Organization of American States created called their Inter-American Democratic Charter. This is something that is a complete affront to, like you said, the democracy that Venezuela has been building for these last 19 years. They have had multiple elections, victorious for the Bolivarian Revolution. But, they have also lost two elections, and one just in December of 2015 in which Venezuela now has a majority right-wing opposition National Assembly.

Now, what Almagro and his friends in the Venezuelan opposition are calling for is elections in Venezuela. Presidential elections in Venezuela are already scheduled for 2018, so it is against Venezuela's Constitution, which like you said was decided upon and voted upon by the people, to call these elections early. What the real issue is, is that the opposition attempted, through a constitutional process known of a recall referendum, to overthrow President Maduro and they completely failed. They collected signatures, 30% of which were proven to be very suspicious, to come from dead people, people without identification, minors. They were unsuccessful in carrying out this referendum, and now they are saying we need elections immediately, which is unconstitutional.

It is this same right-wing opposition that is undemocratic, and that has also strangled the National Assembly. As I said before, they control the National Assembly, which has now become an organization that is incapable of passing any legislation. 15 out of the 16 so-called laws that the National Assembly has passed have been ruled unconstitutional by Venezuela's Supreme Court. This is because they do things like try to privatize public housing, which is against

ALBA-TCP	FTAA
ALBA-TCP ALBA Alliance People's Trade Agreement	FTAA Free Trade Area of the Americas
WHAT IS IT? A regional integration platform for the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, focused on the struggle against poverty and exclusion; based on a project of economic, political, social cooperation, and a mutually beneficial relationship	WHAT IS IT? It is a business deal conceived to ensure the free circulation of goods, services and capital from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego, Argentina. The United States' goal was to exercise control over the economies of the countries on the continent
WHO DEvised IT? Cuba and Venezuela	WHO DEvised IT? The United States
WHO BENEFITS? Latin American and Caribbean countries	WHO BENEFITS? The government of the United States and its economic interests
KEY DATES It was created in Havana, Cuba, in 2004 by Cuba and Venezuela. Bolivia joined in 2006	KEY DATES This FTAA initiative was proposed amid an economic crisis in the U.S. in 1994, during the first Summit of the Americas in Miami
SOCIAL EFFECTS	
It seeks to fight poverty and highlight the importance of human and labor rights in order to promote equality and the defense of sovereignty	It sought to privatize health services, education, social care and pensions
OTHER FEATURES	
It has mechanisms to protect the environment, food sovereignty and energy cooperation among countries	It works against food sovereignty and the environment
It fights against neoliberal policies by creating mechanisms to encourage cooperation	It blocks countries' capacity to control foreign investor activities

SOURCES: RUV / TELESUR

actually organizing troops to support, the US invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965, turning their head the other way through all Central America's US-sponsored wars and all of the death and destruction and disappeared in Argentina and Chile. Completely a United States tool.

And then, you have, in the last few

Venezuela's Constitution. So, the claims of the Organization of American States really need to be more closely examined, as far as the General Secretary calling for invoking the so-called Inter-American Democratic Charter and demands for Venezuela to hold elections immediately.

Cindy: What happened the other day when President Maduro was calling for Venezuelans to come out some kind of armed opposition.

Alison: On April 19, Nicolas Maduro and the United Socialist Party of Venezuela issued a call to the people of Venezuela to come the streets to defend the Bolivarian Revolution. Venezuela was celebrating a national holiday and there were fears that the right-wing was mobilizing violent protests. Especially in the last three weeks, the opposition is attempting to start what they did in 2014, which were violent street riots known as the Guarimbas. 43 people died during those riots. There were street barricades there were violent riots essentially calling for the exit – la salida – of Nicolas Maduro. In order to try to prevent that from happening again Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro called people to the streets and did also

call on a strengthening of militias in defense of the revolution.

I think from the outside we have to completely condemn US intervention and understand that the people of Venezuela are mobilizing to defend the gains that they have made through the Bolivarian Revolution under Comandante Hugo Chavez and now today under Nicolas Maduro.

The threat of violence from the opposition are real and proven. Opposition leaders, of which there are many different factions, have been attacking government institutions regularly, Supreme Court buildings, but also buildings like the Social Mission for Housing, which has come under attack through simple bombs, fire bombs, those sorts of weapons. Opposition members have been caught with weaponry.

There was just a recent article which I think is really important talking about evidence that was released of people in Venezuela reporting that they had been paid large sums of money by different factions of the opposition to provoke violence in demonstrations. The opposition really sees it as in their favour if people die, if there is you know, some

security officials died, about seven people died in the last few weeks and they really see it as further evidence that they can use of the undemocratic nature of the government of Nicolas Maduro. So, they will provoke as much violence as they can during these demonstrations.

I for one was really inspired by the mobilization of people of Venezuela, the masses were out in the streets and very peacefully showed their strength and their support for the revolution in contrast to the violence of the right-wing opposition.

Cindy: The opposition in Venezuela, and it might not be exclusive to Venezuela, is very well-funded and they have a lot of media on their side. Not only that, being well funded, because they are usually the wealthy class in Venezuela, but they are also well-funded by United States organizations. It has been proven, USAid, the National Endowment for Democracy and things like that are also funding the opposition. So, for the people of Venezuela to still be able to mobilize in a large way against that to me is almost like a miracle. They are fighting against massive forces that want to overthrow the



MinMujer (Venezuelan Women's organization) March against the actions of Luis Almagro, the General Secretary of the OAS, Venezuela – March 23, 2017

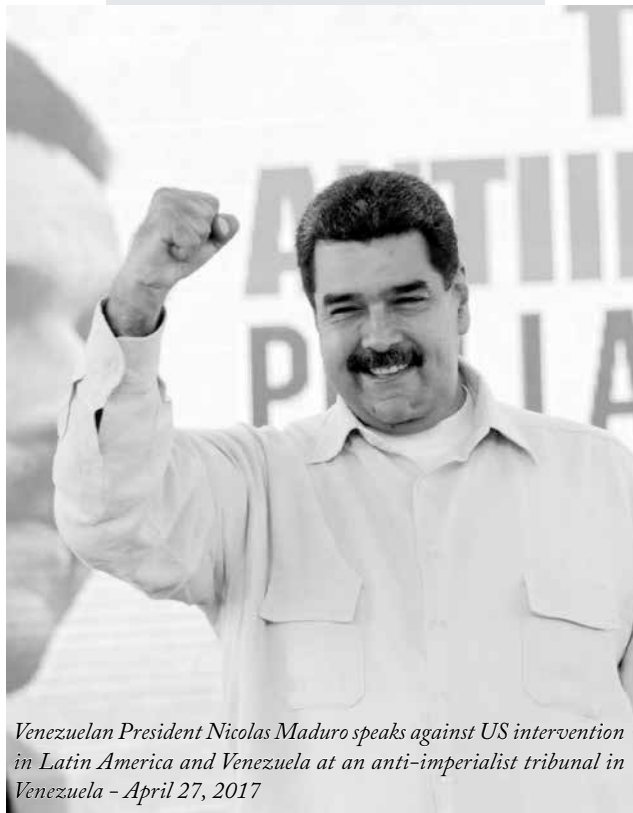
Bolivarian Revolution.

Alison: It is incredibly inspiring to look at the photos from the April 19 and I think that those will continue. Venezuela definitely must remain on-guard. We have, for example, many of the faces of people that were taking center-stage during the 2002 attempted coup against Hugo Chavez now once again appearing. In 2002 there was a coup attempt that was overturned in only 3 days due to the power of the people of Venezuela. Chavez was immediately put back into power and the Bolivarian Revolution continued. Those same actors that tried to carry out that coup, are appearing again and again in Venezuelan media today and out in the streets in Venezuela today. That is a very dangerous signal, especially as like you said, in that 2002 coup attempt, there has been a lot uncovered about US ties directly with those coup-plotters. Those same ties can be made today, whether it is the e-mail records of former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, or it is simply things like a recent announcement from the US Southern Command. This is an office that gives orders to all of the US military forces in Latin America.

Recently, at the same time at the opposition is stirring up destabilization attempts and these protests, the Southern Command is saying things publicly like “Venezuela’s relationships with Russia, China and Iran are now posing a threat to US interests in the region,” or that “the situation in Venezuela is going to most likely, cause regional intervention in the country.” Those are not veiled threats, they are direct threats coming from the mouth of the US government and there are ties directly to Venezuela’s counter-revolutionary opposition that are very clear.

It is also important to note that Trump has shown some signs of his continued attacks on Venezuela. There were some statements that he made during the election. Now, he has talked openly with the Presidents of Chile and Brazil, of course the President of Brazil came to power as the result of a coup. Both of these are right-wing governments, and Trump has openly discussed with them

the situation in Venezuela. He has also met at the White House with the wife of so-called political prisoner Leopaldo Lopez, who is the leader of one of these very violent far-right political parties in Venezuela. Leopaldo Lopez is in prison because he has committed crimes of violence in Venezuela, he is not a political prisoner, but Trump has met with his wife and actually Tweeted, of course, as is his style, calling for the release of political prisoners in



Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro speaks against US intervention in Latin America and Venezuela at an anti-imperialist tribunal in Venezuela - April 27, 2017

Venezuela.

Cindy: what about political prisoners in the United States?

Alison: There you go, the hypocrisy runs deep as we know. I know that most progressive people have no delusions about Trump, but really understanding that it is the entire US government and all of their offices and institutions that are really working against Venezuela today to try and overthrow the revolution. We have to, as people that believe in peace and justice, we really have to work to end the US government to end their intervention and to talk about what is happening in Venezuela today.

Cindy: One of Chavez’ biggest mistake I think, looking back in hindsight, was

I think that he was way too easy on the people that tried to murder him in 2002. He was hours away from being executed, or assassinated, and they just didn’t spend very much time in prison, or anything. I understand why he did it, he wanted the country to heal from it, but the blowback to me has caused more harm I think.

Alison: Yeah, well as a said those same faces are back, so it is hard to say these things in retrospect, but it is clear that for the counter-revolutionary opposition in

Venezuela, the US has found their ways to continuing supporting them, and funding them and they are not going away. But, as we saw, the people of Venezuela are going to keep up their fight, not only against the opposition, but the people of Venezuela are finding ways to continue the revolutionary process to not let the stop them from providing housing, from getting around, in some ways, the economic war through community organizations and the military has now been tasked with helping to do food distribution. It is a dynamic situation, but it is one that the US has its hands all over and we have to be vigilant from here in the United States and Canada.

I will say as well that in the Organization of American States, it is the US government, but also Canada that have joined with the right-wing governments in Latin America to try and condemn Venezuela. Although the Organization of American

States and Secretary General Luis Almagro are broadly seen as puppets of US interests, I think it is significant to show almost the desperation of opposition in Venezuela, that they have to go and meet with this quite meaningless organization in order to get their opinions heard on the international stage, and that they have to so directly for international intervention. This means that the counter-revolutionary opposition is facing problems in Venezuela, that they haven’t been able to establish what they want to as far as overthrowing the government without this international help. The opposition is bold and direct and violent. Even one member of the opposition, who holds a public position, he tweeted in the last few days, claiming

that President Maduro's police forces were using chemical weapons against protestors in Venezuela. Obviously this was trying to join to join in this bandwagon of the claims against Syria today to try and provoke further US direct intervention, which could come in the form of bombs as we saw in Syria.

Cindy: What kind of person would say something like that? The US has just recently bombed Syria with 59 Tomahawk missiles, dropped the Mother of All Bombs in Afghanistan, that just shows the bankruptcy and evilness of the opposition in Venezuela that would want to provoke something like that.

Alison: Exactly, I think that they are very bold in that way. We have to pay attention to these things, whom US Congress is meeting with, their travels to the United States, their meetings with President Trump. It is in the interests of the United States to overthrow the Bolivarian Revolution and the US is going to continue their intervention until they win, or until they are completely defeated. It is a lot up to the people of Venezuela to continue building their revolution, but we have to the work here in the United States and Canada to do the work we need to do.

Cindy: All over Latin America we have seen a lot of inspiring struggles against capitalism and imperialism and they are on the front lines. They are being

murdered, union organizers in Honduras, environmental activists, Colombia, and we have seen a small right-wing march in some of the governments. But, recently Ecuador had a left-ish victory.

Alison: I think that is significant. I think that the ability of Venezuela to continue their building of international relations. As we were talking about at the beginning, this US assault, their determination to overthrow the Bolivarian Revolution is really to isolate the impact that the Venezuelan revolutionary process has had on Latin America, and so as much as they can to try to infiltrate these regional organizations they will continue to do. Venezuela's ability to keep building alliances with Cuba, with Ecuador, to continue building ALBA, the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas, are significant components of what Venezuela is doing in Latin America and will continue to do.

Cindy: Well, Alison, we are running out of time, is there anything that you would like to add?

Alison: Thank you Cindy again, I agree with you a lot. Venezuela is important to inspire people who believe in social justice and in the process towards socialism. Venezuela is something that needs to be talked about more in media. There is a media war against Venezuela and so independent media like that you promote and build over Soapbox, or all of our different connections is really significant to fighting against this media war. The entire capitalist class in Venezuela is

uniting with mass media in the United States and the US government to really lay the land for further US intervention in Venezuela. That is something that if we look across Latin America, the Middle East, Africa, that characterizes our world today in a lot of ways. The US is looking for more and more places to invade, to take their resources, and we have to unite all of allies together in our struggle against US imperialism.

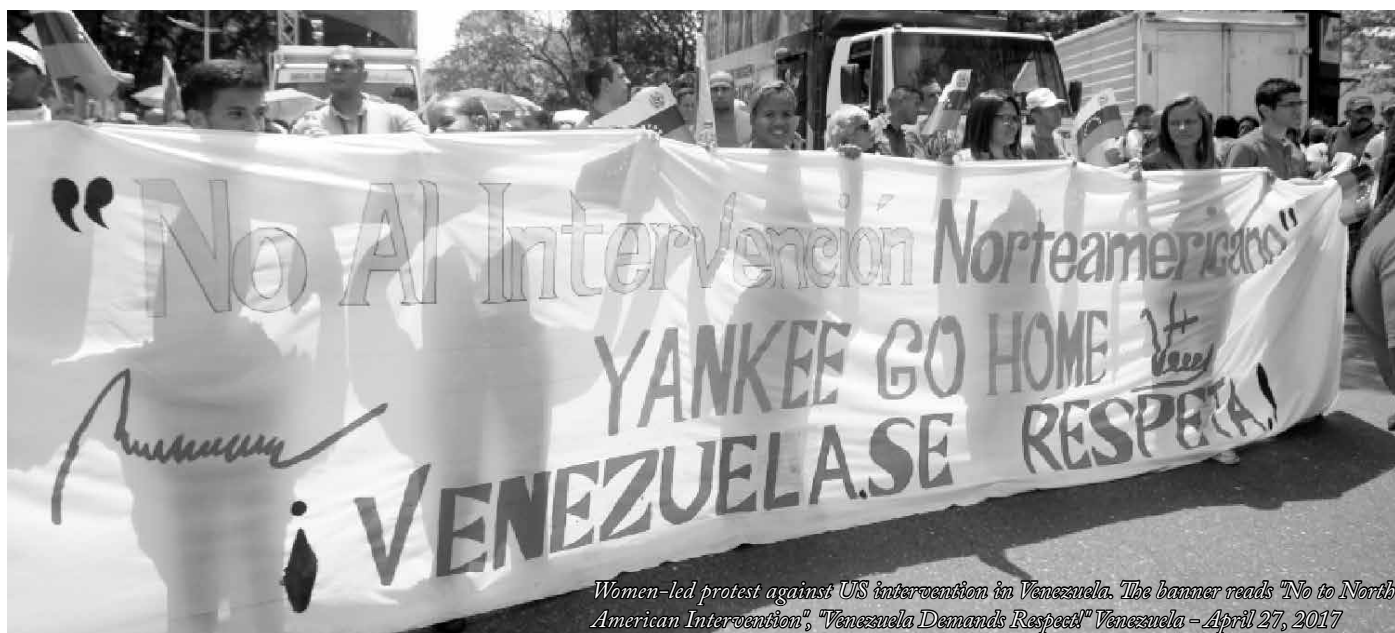
Cindy: And the collaborators in Venezuela are traitors, they are traitors to the country and they are traitors to humanity. Alison, what is your website and where can my listeners, the Soapbox listeners, get more information?

Alison: To read articles I have written on Venezuela, you can go to www.firethistime.net, we are a social justice newspaper based in Vancouver, Canada. People can find us at firethistime.net, or can also find the paper on the Issuu website, or just contact me directly through Facebook.

Cindy: Well, Alison Bodine, thank you so much for being on Cinday Sheehan's Soapbox again and for your willingness to help us understand these issues.

Alison: Thank you Cindy for your time, and thank you to all your listeners on Soapbox.

*Follow Alison Bodine on Twitter:
@alisoncolette*



Women-led protest against US intervention in Venezuela. The banner reads "No to North American Intervention", "Venezuela Demands Respect!" Venezuela - April 27, 2017

Cuba Reaffirms Its Commitment to Venezuela



Declaration by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cuba

We have once again witnessed another infamous and immoral decision by the discredited OAS, against the Bolivarian Revolution; a repetition of the shameful pages written against the Cuban Revolution in the 1960s.

The calling of a Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, to continue harassing the Venezuelan government, constitutes another action consistent with the OAS' traditional role as an instrument of imperialist domination in the hemisphere; in order to undermine the sovereignty, independence and dignity of Our America.

The OAS has always remained with its back to the peoples of America, over an almost 70 year history of subordination to oligarchic and imperialist interests. It has been absent when our region has been the victim of political, economic and military intervention and aggression, or serious democracy and human rights violations.

It is now time to recognize that the OAS is incompatible with the most pressing needs of the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean. It is incapable of

representing their values and interests. It imposed a doctrine of false democracy, responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Latin Americans and Caribbeans and the impoverishment



and exclusion of millions. The OAS chooses to attack and impose, rather than reconcile or dialogue; and disregards the right of states to equality and self-determination. It conspires and subverts genuine and legitimately constituted governments with proven popular support, and deserves the most profound repudiation.

Venezuela has taken the dignified decision to withdraw from the OAS, which we firmly support, having courageously faced the harassment, interference and ignominy which have been the aim of this institution and its frenzied Secretary General. In order to defend the collective interests of the

region, both Chávez in his time, and now President Maduro, stood up to its treachery with dignity and courage. But the OAS never set out to accept a popular government, much less help Venezuela, as some assert. On the contrary, it has increasingly attempted to overthrow the Bolivarian Revolution.

The aggressions and contemptible conduct of the OAS toward Venezuela confirm that wherever there is a government that is not fitting with the interests of imperialist power circles and their allies, it will be attacked. The new more subtle and concealed methods of attrition, to disturb the peace and internal order, without renouncing violence, do not hide the old strategy of trying to prove the unfeasibility of progressivism, the left and their struggles for the economic and social development of our region.

Cuba reaffirms its unwavering commitment to accompany Venezuela and the dignified, courageous and constructive position of President Nicolas Maduro in leading the Bolivarian Revolution. We express our support and solidarity to the people and government of Venezuela, in this new chapter of resistance and dignity, certain of just how much more struggle remains in order to achieve unity and maintain the fundamentals of the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, signed in 2014.

Havana, April 27, 2017.

Canada/U.S./OAS versus Venezuela: Arbitrary to the Extreme

By Arnold August*

Canada, following the lead of the U.S. in the OAS, is arbitrarily manipulating “democracy”, “human rights” and “political prisoners” to subvert the Bolivarian Revolution and the constitutionally-elected President Nicolás Maduro. On March 23, 2017, Canada along with Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, United States of America and Uruguay adopted a declaration on Venezuela. However, these 14 member-states voting in favour of a resolution to invoke the Inter American Democratic Charter of the OAS as a pretext to interfere in Venezuela was not sufficient to carry the approval among the 35 members.

Nonetheless, while the declaration was not posted on the OAS web site because it could not have been considered an officially approved document, sponsoring countries such as the U.S. and the Canada posted it on their respective government web sites. Thus, it remains the political platform of these 14 countries and unofficially of the OAS itself whose Secretary-General Luis Almagro is a servile instrument of the U.S.

The declaration cites “democracy”, “human rights” and political prisoners. Let us take each one of these issues to illustrate how they are their arbitrarily wielded in the OAS.

Canada has been a member of the OAS since 1990. However, we in Canada are justified in asking Canadian governments why it has never called a special meeting of the OAS to consider American violations of democracy and basic electoral principles. To take only some recent examples, was not the Bush dubious electoral victory in 2000 worthy of an OAS investigation? More recently, it came to light that the Obama/Clinton

campaign collaborated with the conglomerate media like CNN to subvert the Sanders campaign. In the same 2016 elections, it was clear for the whole world to see that the Electoral College system, as the direct result of the wealthy slave owners that fashioned the electoral process to keep the majority disenfranchised, is not democratic.

Would all these flagrant violations of democracy not be worth of consideration by the OAS? Furthermore, the U.S. is the only country in the West whereby, even after having served their prison terms, millions of felons (depending on the states) lose their right to vote for life either by law or through intimidating and cumbersome recourse to recuperate their suffrage rights. Blacks consist of a highly disproportionate percentage of the victims resulting from these voting rights violations. All this and more, but no intervention in the OAS by the Canadian government regarding democracy in the U.S.

Ottawa’s record on bringing Washington to task in the OAS on violation of human rights is likewise cowardly. During the entire Obama administration Blacks have been gunned down in the streets by the racist state as a vestige of slavery. Does

this not consist of the most gruesome example of human rights violations? It is only equalled to the century-long genocide of the native peoples going into 2016 and 2017 as exemplified by the Standing Rock struggle. Yet, not a whimper by

Canada in the OAS as this country also ignored the record-number of deportations of Latinos by the Obama administration being followed up and increased by Trump.

The inconsistent Canadian policy with regards to political prisoners is as cynical as its stance on democracy and human rights. The U.S. has the highest per-capita prison population in the world. While all the incarcerated are of course not political prisoners, the incarceration system is indeed politically motivated. In this context, there are also hundreds of political prisoners such Leonard

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5 TACTICS
VENEZUELA'S RIGHT WING

- 1** **Protesting, or Anti-Democratic and Criminal?**
Using a violent coup to overthrow President Hugo Chavez in 2002, leaving 19 people dead
- 2** A months-long oil lockout that cost Venezuela's oil industry US\$13 billion in 2002-2003
- 3** Refusing to participate in elections or refusing to accept the results in 2004, 2005, 2006, 2009, 2013
- 4** Resorting to violence in 2013 to oppose the outcome of democratic elections, leaving 7 dead
- 5** Seeking to violently overthrow the government in 2014, leaving 43 people dead

Canadá, Estados Unidos y la OEA contra Venezuela: Una Arbitrariedad Extrema



* **EN ESPAÑOL** *

Por Arnold August*

Siguiendo el liderazgo de E.U. en la OEA, Canadá está manipulando arbitrariamente los conceptos de “democracia”, “derechos humanos” y “prisioneros políticos” buscando con ello el derrocamiento de la Revolución Bolivariana y del Presidente Nicolás Maduro, constitucionalmente elegido. El 3 marzo de 2017, Canadá, junto con Argentina, Brasil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, México, Panamá, Paraguay, Perú, Estados Unidos y Uruguay, adoptaron una declaración acerca de Venezuela. No obstante la votación de estos 14 Estados miembro, ésta no fue suficiente para hacer adoptar el voto entre los 35 miembros de la organización a favor de la resolución, con el fin de invocar la Carta Democrática Interamericana de la OEA como un

pretexto para interferir en Venezuela.

Aun cuando la declaración no fue anunciada en el sitio web de la OEA, dado que no pudo ser considerada como un documento oficialmente aprobado, países patrocinadores como Estados Unidos y Canadá la publicaron en sus respectivos sitios web. De esta manera, permanece la plataforma política de estos 14 países y, de manera no oficial, la de la OEA misma, cuyo Secretario general, Luis Almagro, es un servil instrumento de Estados Unidos.

La declaración e v o c a “democracia”, “derechos humanos” y “prisioneros políticos”. Tomemos cada una de estos

asuntos para ilustrar cómo son manejados arbitrariamente en la OEA.

Canadá ha sido miembro de la OEA desde 1990. Sin embargo, en Canadá tendríamos motivos para exigirle cuentas al gobierno canadiense en cuanto a que nunca ha convocado a una reunión especial de la OEA para examinar las violaciones de Estados Unidos a la democracia y a los principios electorales básicos. Para tomar tan sólo algunos ejemplos recientes, ¿no fue la victoria electoral de Bush en el año 2000 suficientemente dudosa para solicitar una investigación a la OEA? Más recientemente salió a la luz que la campaña de Obama y Clinton colaboró con el conglomerado mediático de CNN para derrotar a la campaña de Sanders. En las mismas elecciones de 2016 resultó claro para el mundo entero ver que los Colegios Electorales —como resultados directos de los acaudalados propietarios de esclavos que modelaron el proceso electoral para mantener a la mayoría privada de su derecho de sufragio — no son democráticos.

¿No serían estas flagrantes violaciones a la democracia suficientes para ser sometidas a consideración por parte de la OEA? Adicionalmente, Estados Unidos es el único país de occidente donde, aún después de haber pagado su condena, millones de infractores por delitos graves—según los estados, pierden su derecho a voto de por vida ya sea por razones legales o por el intimidante y embarazoso recurso para recuperar su derecho de sufragio. Los afrodescendientes constituyen un altamente desproporcionado porcentaje de las víctimas de estas violaciones del derecho a voto. Todo esto y más, pero ninguna intervención ante la OEA por parte del gobierno canadiense con relación a la democracia en Estados

continúa en la página 35





By Alison Bodine

On Thursday April 6, 2017, the United States launched more than 60 Tomahawk cruise missiles against a Syrian airbase. This direct assault against the sovereign country of Syria was carried out under the pretext that the US government was punishing the Syrian government for allegedly using chemical bombs against their own people. In reality, the US government carried out this attack before there was any investigation at all into the source of the chemical bombs, a fact that was even recognized by the United Nations. This direct assault was an illegal expansion of the US-led proxy war against the people of Syria, and of the US-led campaign to overthrow the President of Syria, Bashar Al-Assad.

The escalation of US attacks on Syria, a country that has faced the full force of US imperialism for more than six years, was a call to people in the US, Canada and around the world to go to street in emergency actions against war. In the 24 hours immediately following the assault, there were more than 50 demonstrations held in the US and Canada alone.

In the two days following the cruise missile attack, Vancouver's peace coalition Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) called two emergency actions in defense of the people of Syria. On Friday, April 7, the day after the attack MAWO called on peace-loving people in Vancouver to join them at a rally and picket action at the US Consulate in downtown Vancouver.

In recognition of the both the urgency of the action, as well as the importance of uniting common struggles against US imperialism, MAWO's protest for Syria was combined with the protest and picket action demanding US Hands Off Venezuela, organized monthly by the Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign. Together, MAWO and Fire This Time demanded that the United States immediately end its threats, sanctions, and all forms of imperialist intervention in Syria and Venezuela.

On Saturday, April 8 MAWO called people to the streets of Vancouver again for an emergency action demanding "Stop Bombing Syria! US Hands Off Syria!" at the Vancouver Art Gallery in downtown Vancouver. Through a dynamic program of speakers and chanting, passers-by on the busy street were encouraged to get more information about the US-led proxy war in Syria, as well as the government of Canada's gross complicity. They were also invited to sign a petition demanding that the government of Canada end its intervention in Iraq and Syria, which includes both military intervention as well as political and financial support for so-called moderate rebels.

Both of these urgent actions began with an opening from Indigenous leader and organizer Gordon August. His powerful words and song were followed by a diverse range of speakers including: David Whittelsey, long-time civil rights and antiwar organizer; Nita Palmer, writer and researcher on Syria and member of the Fire This Time Editorial Board; Azza Rojbi and Janine Solanki, MAWO executive members; Roud Laila, Canadian-Syrian activist.

The April 8 emergency action was also covered by Global BC News, which meant that tens of thousands of people were able to see that people in Vancouver were protesting US attacks on Syria, and the government of Canada's support for these attacks, on the nightly news.

MAWO Continues to Educate, Organize and Mobilize Against the New Era of War and Occupation!

Less than a week after the US launched cruise missiles against Syria, the United States added another deadly bombing to its long list of the crimes it has committed against humanity. On Thursday April 13, the US government dropped its largest non-nuclear bomb on the people of Afghanistan. The MOAB (Mother of All Bombs) has a destruction radius of greater than 1 mile and brought further devastation upon a people that have been facing US/NATO war and occupation for over 16 years.

NOW MORE THAN EVER!

***MAWO Continues to Organize, Educate and Mobilize Against War & Occupation!
MAWO Organizes Emergency Actions for US Hands Off Syria!***

Whether it is recent threats, attacks or bombings against Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen, North Korea or Venezuela, the US war machine is showing no signs that it is slowing down. In fact, since the US invaded Afghanistan in 2001, the world has been characterized by the new era of war and occupation, a period of escalating wars, occupations and destruction against poor, working and oppressed people all over Latin America, the Middle East and Africa.

In response to this new era of war and occupation, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) has organized hundreds of rallies, pickets, forums, film showings and film and music festivals against war and occupation in Vancouver and the Lower Mainland since their founding in 2003.

In addition to the emergency actions organized against the US bombing of Syria, MAWO also held two community forums in April. The first, a forum titled "Hands Off Yemen! Why Yemen is Under Attack," was held on Friday April 7. This forum brought together a panel of local and international speakers including: Khaled Al-Seragi from the Yemeni Community; Azza Rojbi, an executive member of Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO); Mohammad Alwazir, the Director of Legal Affairs at Arabian Rights Watch Association, Washington, DC and Kim Sharif, a lawyer, human rights campaigner, and Director of Human Rights for Yemen, based in London, England. The forum also premiered a new educational video about the US-backed Saudi Arabian bombing and siege on Yemen called, "Restoring Illegitimacy Illegitimately" produced by the Affairs at Arabian Rights Watch Association.

The diverse panel was followed by a lively discussion that focused on the depth of the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, as well as the significance of the government of Canada's support for the government of Saudi Arabia, including the \$15 billion arms deal between the two countries. The forum also received coverage on Yemeni nation-wide television.

Throughout April, MAWO also continued to build their education and action campaign against US' attacks on Syria with a forum and discussion on Tuesday April 18, as well as a rally and petition drive on Friday April 28.

The community forum featured a dynamic panel of two speakers: Nita Palmer, the author of "War and Occupation in Afghanistan: Which Way Forward" and member of the Editorial Board of Fire This Time Newspaper

and Ali Yerevani, a participant in the 1979 Iranian Revolution, social justice activist for more than four decades and the Political Editor of Fire This Time Newspaper.

The speakers expanded on the recent US escalation against Syria by examining the balance sheet of US intervention in Syria over the last 6 years, the role of Russia and Iran in Syria, the response of the government of Canada to the expanding US war drive, the new era of war and occupation and, most importantly, how the antiwar movement in Canada and the US must respond to this increasing war drive with a united campaign of consistent



Vancouver



MAWO forum on Yemen



From left: Nita Palmer, Ali Yerevani, Alison Bodine

actions and evens against all forms of US and imperialist intervention in Syria.

This same call for consistent actions was carried through with MAWO's monthly antiwar rally and petition drive on Friday, April 28. This rally focused on the demands of "US Hands Off Syria!" and "US/Saudi Arabia Hands Off Yemen!" The antiwar rally was a loud and energetic action in the busy streets of downtown

Vancouver, calling attention to the crimes committed by the United States, Canada and their allies in Syria and Yemen. As just one example of the devastation, in the last six years, over 12 million people in Syria have been displaced, and 7,400 schools have been closed. Over two years of bombing and the inhuman air, naval and land blockade imposed on Yemen have created a humanitarian crisis. According to the UN, a child under the age of five dies every 10 minutes of preventable causes in Yemen.

At the protest, passers-by were encouraged to sign petitions demanding that Canada end its intervention in Iraq and Syria, that Canada end the \$15 billion arms deal with Saudi Arabia and that Canada leave the NATO military alliance. The MAWO information table was constantly busy with people wanting to learn more and discuss Canada's role in the US war drive.

MAWO Joins in Vancouver Rallies for the Environment

April was also an important month for actions centered on Mother Earth and the environment. The US military not only destroys all human life and civilization that comes into its deadly path, it also devastates land, water and the air. Whether through nuclear weapons, chemical weapons like Agent Orange and white phosphorus, or with its other murderous artillery, every part of the US military machine is a force of human and environmental destruction that will persist for generations to come.

Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) organized antiwar contingents at three large rallies for the environment in Vancouver: the April 22 March for Science, the April 22 Earth Day march and the April 29 Climate Convergence rally for Jobs, Justice and the Climate. At these demonstrations MAWO brought the demand of "No to Wars and Occupations! No to Environmental Degradation!"

Looking over the last month of the US' expanding war drive it is clear that now more than ever, it is the time for peace-loving people in Vancouver and around the world to come together. We must stand with the people of Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan, Bahrain and all across Latin America, the Middle East and Africa in the fight against imperialist wars and occupations!

Find out more about how to get involved with MAWO at www.mawovancouver.org.

*Follow Alison Bodine on Twitter:
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Cuba Political & Cultural Event

CUBA FILM & TRIVIA NIGHT

Enjoy a Cuban Film, Answer Trivia, Have Fun, Win Prizes!

Saturday, May 13
7pm

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RETURN GUANTANAMO TO CUBA!


NOW!

WEDNESDAY MAY 17TH
4PM
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THE STRUGGLE
CONTINUES!



U.S. HANDS OFF VENEZUELA!

2 EVENTS
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- 1.. PROTEST ACTION 4 PM
U.S. HANDS OFF VENEZUELA!
US CONSULATE IN VANCOUVER
1070 WEST PENDER STREET
- 2.. INFO TABLING & PETITION 5:30 PM
MADURO IS OUR PRESIDENT!
VANCOUVER ART GALLERY
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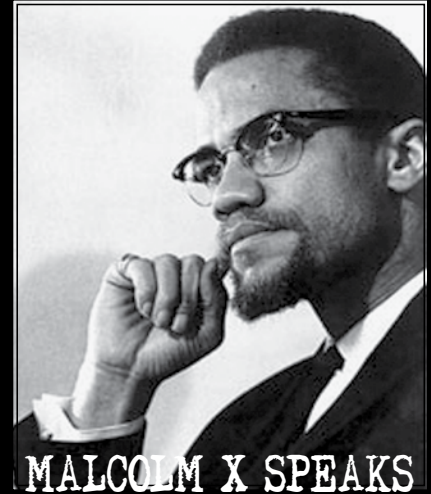
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"By Any Means Necessary..."



*Excerpt from the Q&A period of
Malcolm's speech: There's A Worldwide
Revolution Going On (Feb. 15, 1965)*

Don't I think that we should become involved in some direct action, demonstrations? We are going to unveil our program on that next Sunday at two o'clock. Brother, I'm for anything you're for as long as it's going to get some results. I'm for anything you're for. As long as it's intelligent, as long as it's disciplined, as long as it's aimed in the right direction—I'm for it. And what determines what we should do, or shouldn't do, will in no way be influenced by what the man downtown thinks.

We don't need anybody on the outside laying the ground rules by which we are going to fight our battles. We'll study the battle, study the enemy, study what we're up against, and then outline or map our own battle strategy. And we'll get some results. But as long as you have someone coming in from the outside telling you how you should do it and how you shouldn't do it—and always what they tell you is nonviolence, peaceful, love everybody, forgive them Lord, they know not what they do. As long as you get into that kind of bag, why you'll never get anywhere. What we want is to let them know that our aims are just. Our aims are within the realm of justice. And since they are, we're justified in going after those aims.

Unidos.

El récord de Ottawa en cuanto a cuestionar a Washington ante la OEA por violación de los derechos humanos es asimismo cobarde. A lo largo de la administración Obama, los afrodescendientes fueron abatidos a tiros en las calles por el estado racista, cual vestigio de la esclavitud. ¿No es este uno de los más atroces ejemplos de violación de los derechos humanos? Esto es tan sólo comparable al genocidio centenario de los pueblos indígenas, sucedido a inicios de los años 2016 y 2017, y ejemplificado en la lucha de la reserva Standing Rock. A pesar de ello, ni una queja por parte de Canadá ante la OEA, más aun cuando este país también ha ignorado el número récord de deportaciones de latinos por parte de la administración Obama, seguidas y en aumento por la Trump.

La inconsistente política canadiense con relación a los prisioneros políticos es tan cínica como su posición acerca de la democracia y los derechos

humanos. La población penitenciaria per cápita de Estados Unidos es una de las más altas del mundo. Mientras que no todos los prisioneros son por supuesto prisioneros políticos, el sistema penitenciario es motivado políticamente. En este contexto, también hay cientos de prisioneros políticos tales como Leonard Peltier, un líder indígena condenado a 35 años y Mumia Abu Jama, un activista afrodescendiente encarcelado desde 1981. ¿Por qué Canadá no mira justo hacia el Sur de su frontera para cuestionar ante la OEA este tema de los prisioneros políticos en lugar de los supuestos prisioneros políticos en Venezuela?

La posición de Canadá ante la OEA representa un sumario de arbitrariedades. Si algún país en el mundo debería ser investigado ante la OEA, éste debería ser Estados Unidos y no Venezuela.

La posición de Canadá no tiene en cuenta el sentimiento anti imperialista manifestado por un importante segmento de la sociedad canadiense contra Estados Unidos. Canadienses de todas las condiciones sociales han demostrado y

han hecho público en todo el país su apoyo a la Revolución Bolivariana, al legado de Hugo Chávez y en contra de la injerencia extranjera.

No obstante, la actitud servil del gobierno canadiense ante Estados Unidos pone de relieve el significado de la Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños (CELAC), que incluye a 33 países soberanos del continente americano, con excepción de Estados Unidos y Canadá. El ulterior desarrollo de la CELAC es la única respuesta a la OEA, centrada en el pensamiento único estadounidense de los gobiernos de Estados Unidos y Canadá acerca de democracia, derechos humanos y prisioneros políticos.

** Arnold August, periodista de Montreal y autor de "Democracy in Cuba and the 1997-98 Elections" (Editorial José Martí, La Habana, 1999) y "Cuba y sus vecinos: Democracia en movimiento" apareció en inglés en 2013 y en español en 2015 en Cuba (Editorial Ciencias Sociales). El es también miembro de la Red de Intelectuales en Defensa de la Humanidad (Canadá).*

*Sigue Arnold August en Twitter:
@Arnold_August*

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Peltier, Native Indian leader and icon serving 35 years and Mumia Abu Jama, a Black activist incarcerated since 1981. Why does Canada not look south right across the border to raise, in the OAS, this issue of political prisoners rather than the supposed political prisoners in Venezuela?

Canada's position in the OAS represents the epitome of arbitrariness. If any country should be investigated in the OAS, it should be the U.S. and not Venezuela.

Canada's stance does not take into account the anti-U.S. imperialist sentiment of an important section of Canadian society. Specifically, Canadians from all walks of life have demonstrated and issued statements all over the country in support of the Bolivarian Revolution, the heritage of Hugo Chávez and against foreign interference.

The Canadian government's servile attitude toward the U.S. does however, unwittingly, highlight the significance of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC by its Spanish

initials) that includes the 33 sovereign countries in the Americas except U.S. and Canada. CELAC's further development is the only answer to the OAS which based on the American and Canadian governments' U.S.-centric outlook on democracy, human rights and political prisoners.

** Arnold August is a Montreal-based journalist, lecturer and author of "Cuba and Its Neighbours: Democracy in Motion" (Zed Books & Fernwood Publishing, 2013). He is also a member of the Network of Intellectuals in Defense of Humanity (Canada).*

*Follow Arnold August on Twitter:
@Arnold_August*



"Hey Trump, End the Blockade on Cuba NOW!"

By Alison Bodine

For more than 50 years the US has maintained an illegal and unjust blockade against Cuba. According to Cuba's Mission to the UN, this cruel policy cost Cuba at least \$4.7 billion in the year between April 2015 and March 2016 alone. This huge cost might be surprising to some, considering that the US and Cuba re-established diplomatic relations over two years ago, however, the main components of the blockade still remain firmly in place.

Because of this, on the 17 of each month, Cuban flags can be seen waving in Downtown Vancouver. On this day, Friends of Cuba Against the US Blockade (FCAB-Vancouver) organizes a picket action in front of the US Consulate to demand an end to the US Blockade on Cuba, the return of Guantanamo Bay to Cuba and that the US end their campaign for regime change in Cuba.

On April 17, chants of "Hey, Trump, End the Blockade!" filled the air as participants in the FCAB action made sure that the US Consulate in the building above could hear loud and clear the shouts coming from below. These demands were also echoed by voices far away in Ottawa, Canada, where Ottawa-Cuba Connections also organizes a picket on the 17

of each month at the US Embassy.

This month, FCAB-Vancouver also participated in an on-line Twitter Storm action which was called by the New York Cuba Solidarity Project. As part of this event supporters of Cuba are encouraged to send a Tweet to US President Trump "@realDonaldTrump I support lifting the



blockade against Cuba! #cubasibloqueo #endtheblockade"

As Cuba's Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez said while on a tour in Spain this month, "The current government of the United States has said it is reviewing its policy towards Cuba. We reiterate our readiness for dialogue and

cooperation on the basis of the absolute respect for our sovereignty."

Whether on the campaign trail or in office, US President Trump has had nothing good to say when it comes to ending this cruel and unjust policy. In fact, he has even threatened to put an end to any ongoing talks between the US and Cuba. Friends of Cuba around the world have the responsibility to join with Cuba in their demand to end the US blockade. With united and consistent actions, we will win!

Join FCAB-Vancouver at our next action, Wednesday May 17, 4pm at the US Consulate in Downtown Vancouver, 1075 West Pender Street.

To get the latest updates on US/Cuba relations and find out how to get involved visit: www.vancubavblockade.org

END THE BLOCKADE ON CUBA NOW!

RETURN GUANTANAMO TO CUBA NOW!

US GOVERNMENT STOP THE CAMPAIGN OF 'REGIME CHANGE' IN CUBA AND IMMEDIATELY STOP INTERFERING IN CUBA'S SOVEREIGNTY AND SELF-DETERMINATION!

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Mumia Has 1st Win in New Legal Proceeding

First Legal Step Won in Mumia's New Challenge to his Conviction!

Just days after the DA's office argued Mumia's new legal challenge should be dismissed for not being "timely" and that the precedent setting case of *Williams v Pennsylvania*, that it is a violation of due process for a judge to rule in a case that he had previously had a significant personal involvement in a critical prosecutorial decision, does not apply to Mumia's case, Judge Leon Tucker ruled in favor of Mumia's demand for discovery of the DA's files.

On April 24, Mumia's 63rd birthday, the courtroom was filled with Mumia's supporters and demonstrators rallied outside and all day and into the evening demanding Mumia's freedom. The DA's office argued there was no evidence that PA Supreme Court Justice Ronald Castille, who ruled on all of Mumia's appeals from 1998-2008, had been involved in Mumia's case while he was the District Attorney from 1986-1991 or as a senior district attorney during Mumia's 1982 trial. Mumia's attorney, Christina Swarns of the the NAACP Legal Defense Fund (LDF) spoke to the exceptional circumstances of Mumia's case and that the Motion for Discovery should be granted to determine the particulars of Castille's personal involvement in Mumia's prosecution, including his appeals.

Judge Tucker did not rule for the prosecution and dismiss Mumia's petition. He granted discovery and ordered the DA's office to produce and turn over all records and memos regarding Castille's involvement in Mumia's case; pre-trial, trial, post-trial and direct appeal proceedings; communications between Castille and his staff and any public statements Castille made about Mumia's case during or after his tenure as District Attorney of Philadelphia. These records are to be turned over to Mumia's attorneys within 30 days, by May 30, 2017, and Mumia has fifteen days to

file amendments to his post-conviction petition.

This is an unquestionable win for Mumia in the PA courts. It opens the prosecution files on Mumia's case to him, for the first time, ever. The DA's office will likely stall and appeal and we should be prepared for protestations that the records do not exist. This new legal proceeding is a path towards Mumia's freedom; we can win Mumia's freedom with mass international protest and publicity.

From Atty. Rachel Wolkenstein



By Alison Bodine

On April 6, 2017 the head of the US Southern Command, Admiral Kurt W. Tidd, gave a report to the Senate Armed Services Committee on Venezuela. In it he stated "The growing humanitarian crisis in Venezuela could eventually compel a regional response," while at the same time issuing a warning that Russia, China and Iran are a threat to US interests in the region.

His words are a dangerous manifestation of continued US meddling and intervention in Venezuela. These threats, straight from the mouth of the US government, go hand-in-hand with those made by the Secretary General of the Organization of American

Revolution.

On April 26, 2017 Venezuela announced that it was leaving the Organization of American States (OAS). As President Maduro tweeted, "April 26, 2017: a day of dignity and independence, I have taken the giant step to break with imperialist interventionism."

By leaving the OAS, Venezuela joins with Cuba, which has continued to refuse to join after being expelled following the victory of the Cuban Revolution.

Whether through their puppet Luis Almagro and the OAS, or through other means, the attempts of the US government to force regime change in Venezuela will continue. These latest imperialist attacks make solidarity with



VANCOUVER CONTINUES TO DEMAND: US RESPECT THE SOVEREIGNTY & SELF-DETERMINATION OF VENEZUELA!

the Bolivarian revolution now more important than ever before.

In opposition to US-led sanctions, threats against Venezuela, and violations against Venezuela's sovereignty and self-determination by the US government and the OAS, the Fire

States (OAS) Luis Almagro during his campaign against Venezuela.

Throughout March and April of 2017, US-puppet Almagro escalated his campaign to try to remove Venezuela from the OAS (a regional body that brings together countries of the Western hemisphere) by invoking the so-called Democratic Charter. His dirty manoeuvrings within the OAS were supported by the United States and Canada, as well as a line-up of right-wing and reactionary governments in Latin America. They were also a clear violation of the sovereignty of Venezuela, a fact that was recognized by many member-states of the OAS, as well as supporters of Venezuela all around the world.

Over the past 19 years of the Bolivarian Revolution, the US government and their imperialist allies have worked together with the capitalist class and counter-revolutionaries in Venezuela to try and overthrow the revolutionary government and overturn the great gains made for poor, working and oppressed people in Venezuela.

Whether coming from the US government, Luis Almagro and the OAS, or the mouths of Venezuela's violent counter-revolutionary opposition, these threats are also to serve one purpose – to provoke foreign intervention in Venezuela against the government of President Nicolas Maduro and the Bolivarian

This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign organized their monthly picket action at the US Consulate in downtown Vancouver on Friday April 7.

US Hands Off Venezuela! US Hands Off Syria! Combined Action

The day before this action as set to take place, the US government launched a cruise missile assault on an air base in Syria. This escalation of war against the people of Syria required an urgent and immediate international response by all peace-loving people.

Thus, the planned monthly protest and picket demanding US Hands Off Venezuela was combined with an emergency protest demanding that the US stop bombing and all intervention in Syria organized by Vancouver's antiwar coalition, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO).

It was a powerful example of international solidarity when chants of "US Hands Off Syria!" and "US Hands Off Venezuela!" filled the air around the US Consulate. All countries facing the attacks of US imperialism are fighting a common enemy, and we are stronger standing in this struggle together!

For more about Fire This Time's Venezuela Solidarity Campaign visits: www.firethistime.net

Follow Alison on Twitter: @Alisoncolette

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VCSC Encourages People in Vancouver to Join the 2017 Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade to Cuba!

By Alison Bodine

In 2015, over 1.3 million people from Canada went to Cuba as tourists. Most go to Cuba for the islands beautiful beaches and vibrant culture. But, did you know that each year there is also the opportunity to go to Cuba on a volunteer work brigade?

Really, what better way to learn about

committee members of Friends of Cuba Against the US Blockade – Vancouver. Throughout the event, they both shared their favorite experiences as participants in past Ché Brigades, often with a fact about Cuba's international solidarity or world-renowned universal healthcare system inter-woven.

Other past 'Brigadistas' were also invited to join in the program, all giving the audience a piece of what to expect from this life-changing experience. Depending on who you ask, the highlight of the event was either the game of trivia, which had everyone debating and discussing answers to questions about Cuba and the Cuban Revolution, or the raffle, in which people won books, t-shirts, and even a bottle of Havana Club rum!



By the end of the night, everyone in the room, of many ages and backgrounds, was ready to get on an airplane and join the 2017 Ché Brigade! This year, the Brigade goes from April 28 – May 12, and will visit the eastern provinces of Cuba: Holguin, Santiago and Guantanamo.

Visit www.vancubasolidarity.com to find out about the Ché Brigade report-back and other actions for Cuba that Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba will be organizing in the coming months!

Follow Alison Bodine on Twitter:
@Alisoncolette

Cuba and the Cuban Revolution, then to go there and see it for yourself! Each year, dozens of people from Canada are given this opportunity by joining the Ernesto Ché Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade, organized by the Canadian Network on Cuba (CNC). This year was no different.

In order to encourage people in Vancouver to join in this year's 25th annual Ché Brigade, Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) organized an information night on Saturday April 8. Through a lively program of multimedia, music, poetry and trivia, VCSC brought a bit of Havana into East Vancouver.

The evening was emceed by Alison Bodine and Azza Rojbi, executive

Fire This Time Newspaper - Correspondent in Cuba!

Fire This Time Newspaper Editorial Board member Janine Solanki is in Cuba with the 25th Annual Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade!

Look forward to upcoming reports from Janine's experiences this year in revolutionary Cuba. With the Brigade she will participate in May 1st International Workers Day events in Holguin and the 5th International Conference to End Foreign Military Bases in the city of Guantanamo, as well as visit Cuba's hospitals, schools and cultural centres!



¡Venceremos!

We Will Win!



35 Million-Strong Strike Against Temer's Neoliberal Reforms Brings Brazil to a Halt

27 April 2017

Since early Friday morning, more than 35 million people in Brazil have been taking part in one of the biggest general strikes in the country's history against President Michel Temer's neoliberal reforms, bringing the country to a standstill.

The strike was largely organized by Unified Workers Central, or CUT, the largest union federation in Latin America, and the Workers Party of Brazil, former President Dilma Rousseff's political party.

In Brazil's biggest city and economic hub, Sao Paulo, only one metro line was operating, 70 major routes were blocked off as was access to the city's major airport. Before daylight, a number of protesters clashed with police while trying to occupy a vacant building. Police were also seen firing tear gas to disperse protesters and at least 12 people were detained.

Dozens of other unions, grassroots organizations, teachers, church leaders, civil servants also threw their support behind the strike.

The strike was called immediately after Temer's administration pushed through a controversial labor reform bill on Wednesday in Brazil's chamber of deputies.

The reform would undermine workers' rights by eliminating payment for their commute from their contracts, reducing compensation for employer abuse, and most importantly, allowing employers to reduce workers' salaries while increasing their work hours.

The bill, which proposes to end mandatory union dues, must still be approved by the Senate. It was approved by Brazil's lower house by 296 votes to 177.

Temer is also proposing a 20-year freeze on public spending and cuts to pension protections.

The general strike comes amid a dismal disapproval rating for the Temer administration — a staggering 87 percent, according to the latest Ipsos poll. The mass mobilization of workers and civil society also comes on the heels of ongoing protests, such as the five-day encampment of Indigenous peoples and a police union protest, both occurring in front of Brazil's Congress.

Source: teleSUR English with edits

It's Official: Lenin Moreno Elected President of Ecuador

4 April 2017

Ecuadorian election authorities made the results of the presidential election official Tuesday, announcing a win for renowned disability activist and former vice president Lenin Moreno of President Rafael Correa's governing Alianza Pais party.

Moreno and his vice president Jorge Glas won with 5,057,149 votes or 51.16 percent over former banker Guillermo Lasso and his vice president Andres Paez, of the right-wing CREO-SUMA alliance, who secured 4,827,753 votes and 48.84 percent.

"We want to dignify politics, to be a good example for citizens, especially for our youth," Moreno said in a press conference in Quito after the CNE announced the official results.

Moreno is set to continue and expand social programs introduced under outgoing President Rafael Correa, for whom Lenin served as vice president from

Venezuela Celebrates 100% Health Coverage Under Barrio Adentro

20 April 2017

Venezuela's poorest communities now all have health care services via the Barrio Adentro Mission, with 100 percent coverage, according to President Nicolas Maduro, who announced the achievement during a live broadcast.

Telesur visited one of the communities, Barrio Cotiza in Caracas, which currently benefits from the free, social service. The Integral Diagnostic Center has 25 doctors, Cuban and Venezuelan, who dedicate their lives to the well-being of those in the community.

Cuban medic Feliz Cascare has been working at the center for almost three years and said the experience has been very rewarding, adding that the clinic provides a range of medical services, which include intensive therapy, ultrasounds, x-rays and emergency services. "The patients here are poor people. They don't have anyone else to help them when they get sick."

The Barrio Adentro Mission was created in April 2003 with the aim of making primary care a priority in Venezuelan health policy. The goal is to offer a solution to the health-related needs of all Venezuelans, with special attention placed on marginalized populations, all governed by the pillars of universality, equity, accessibility, cultural ownership, gratuity, justice, social participation and civil co-responsibility.

For the program, hospitals and clinics are created in different parts of the country in order to meet people's health requirements. Additionally, rehabilitation areas have been created to serve those with disabilities.

President Maduro said that Venezuela is now only the second country in the world to provide free health care coverage to its people as a right. It is one of a multitude of programs that aim to serve the needs of all the country's people, including the poorest.

Source: teleSUR English

2007 to 2013, before working as the U.N. special envoy for Disability and Accessibility.

Moreno who has been wheelchair bound after being shot and paralyzed in 1998, is well known for his advocacy work for people with disabilities and supporting public education. Jorge Glas, who also served in the Correa administration will now serve as vice president. The new administration will be officially inaugurated on May 24.

As Rafael Correa departs after 10 years of consecutive rule and a number of social gains made under the Citizens' Revolution, the victory for Moreno is seen as key not only for Ecuador but for the wider Latin American region. Ecuador will remain a part of the pink tide that has swept the region in the past two decades, not following the right-wing shift that took place in 2016 in Argentina and Brazil.

After decades of social and economic instability including the frequent changing of presidents, Alianza Pais under Correa lifted more than 1 million people out of poverty, tripled tax income and expanded the country's universal health care and education system.

Source: teleSUR English with edits

SYSTEM CHANGE NOT CLIMATE CHANGE

Environment, Humanity & Capitalism

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► **THOMAS DAVIES:**

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